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Understanding the Complexities and Origins of Gun Violence in Chicago

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UNDERSTANDING THE COMPLEXITIES AND ORIGINS OF GUN VIOLENCE IN CHICAGO

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Contents

Chapter 1

Introduction

Last summer, in the Englewood neighborhood of Chicago's South Side, Yasmin Miller was driving home from her local laundromat with her 20-month-old son, Sincere Gaston, seated in the back of her car. Several stray bullets from a nearby shooting hit Yasmin's car, killing her son. At a vigil for Sincere, Yasmin Miller made an emotional plea to her South Side community: "We need your help. We got to do better. I don't want another mother to feel my pain. I can't sleep, eat, I cannot do anything without that boy, nothing. It is killing me" (Shulze 2020). Several days later, also on the South Side, a 7-year-old girl attending a Fourth of July celebration and a 14-year-old boy walking down the street were both shot and killed. (MacFarquhar and Chiarito 2020).

In many American cities, heart-wrenching stories like Yasmin's are sadly the norm. Ripping through neighborhoods, urban gun violence has taken children from their parents, parents from their children, and shattered people's lives. Nowhere is this deadly trend more apparent than the city of Chicago. In 2016, the city's violence hit shocking levels, with close to 4,000 shootings and 632 homicides, of which 90% were committed with guns. From 2017 to 2019, the city's gun violence and homicide rates dropped slightly. However, with 3,468 shootings and 643 homicides so far in 2020, the city has already surpassed the record numbers of 2016 (Chicago Tribune 2020). As a result, Chicago has become a city known for and defined by its high rates of gun violence and homicide; many refer to it as "Chi-raq".

Tragically and predictably, gun violence does not affect everyone equally. In 2019, Chicago's population was nearly 3 million people where 49.4% of its residents were white and 30.1% were black (U.S. Census Bureau 2019). Despite comprising a minority of the population, 80% of gun violence victims in Chicago in 2016 and 2020 were black (Chicago Tribune 2020).

The city's gun violence is further concentrated: the vast majority of victims are male black teens and men. According to the University of Chicago Crime Lab, in 2015 and 2016, black youth and men aged 15 to 34 make up only 4% of Chicago's population but over half its shooting victims. Whites, in contrast, constitute only 5% of homicide victims (University of Chicago Crime Lab 2017). This gendered and racial reality is further illustrated by patient records at the Lurie Children's Hospital, where, from 2013 to 2017, black teens aged 15 to 19 had a homicide-victimization rate of 365.3 per 100,000. On the other hand, all other teens in the city have a homicide-victimization rate of 22 per every 100,000 (Lurie Children's Hospital 2019). Additionally, according to Chicago's leading anti-violence nonprofit organization, the majority of perpetrators of gun violence are gang-affiliated black teens and men aged 17 to 26 (Chicago CRED 2019).

This gun-violence divide is not only racial but spatial, as Chicago is one of the most racially segregated cities in the country. Indeed, the city is almost entirely divided based on race, with black residents concentrated on the South and West Sides and whites either downtown or on the north side of the city. For example, the South Side areas of Washington Park and Burnside are 98% black, while Lincoln Park and Edison Park on the north side are 80% white (Corporation for Enterprise Development 2015). Citywide, of Chicago's 1.6 million black residents, 48.2% live in majority-black neighborhoods on the West and South Sides (Comen 2019). In addition to race, Chicago is also extremely segregated based on economic status and opportunity. For example, in 2015, the majority-black neighborhoods of Riverdale and Fuller Park had poverty rates of 61% and 56%, respectively (Hertz 2016). The metrics for these areas mirror statistics for the city as a whole: in 2018, Chicago's black residents had a poverty rate of

34% and an unemployment rate of 16.2%. Whites, in contrast, had an unemployment rate of 4.7% and median household income of $70,960, nearly $46,000 more than the figure for blacks. Worst of all, in 2018, the unemployment rate for black men ages 20 to 34 was 40% (Semuels 2018).

With this in mind, according to Chicago's leading antiviolence organization Chicago CRED (Creating Real Economic Destiny), violence and racial inequality are heavily concentrated, with nearly 80% of gun violence occurring in just 15 of Chicago's 77 neighborhoods – the almost exclusively black areas of the South and West Sides (Chicago CRED 2019). In 2015, for example, majority-black Fuller Park had a homicide rate of 104 per every 100,000 residents, while the figure for majority-white Lincoln Park stood at 6 per every 100,000 (Hertz 2016). Therefore, violence, race, and inequality perfectly overlap in Chicago, where black residents are not only heavily impacted by the violence but live in an almost completely separate reality from whites.

Due to this divide, the situation in Chicago is often referred to as a "tale of two cities" in which residents living on the northside often dismiss the black South and West Sides as dangerous, violent, and full of crime. This divide is seen by many as natural and Chicagoans often go about their daily lives unaffected and accepting this as the norm. Most importantly, over the last several years, Chicago's high rates of violence in black neighborhoods is frequently brought up in response to the "Black Lives Matter" (BLM) movement. For years, the U.S. has seen numerous unarmed black men gunned down by police across the country. In response to these killings, the BLM movement has exploded, with thousands of Americans taking to the streets calling for an end to police brutality and racial inequalities. Those against the BLM movement often counter by asking what about "black on black crime"? Indeed, horrific stories

like Yasmin's and statistics showing high rates of violent black crime are often cited in this counternarrative. These critics argue that black violent crime in cities like Chicago is the real problem, not racism or police brutality against black Americans.

Moreover, this black crime narrative often arises in the numerous police shootings of unarmed black men. In 2014, Laquan McDonald, a 17-year-old black teenaged boy, was shot 16 times by police officers on Chicago's South Side. The police dash cam footage shows McDonald was unarmed and walking in the street. When asked why he shot McDonald, Police Officer Jason Van Dyke stated that he feared for his life; he erroneously thought McDonald was armed (Husain 2019). This narrative is frequently cited as justification for killing unarmed black men. Indeed, in shooting after shooting police officers like Van Dyke state that they feared for their lives or that they thought the person was armed, and that instead of reaching for, say, a wallet to produce identification, the black victim was reaching for a gun. In response, critics often blame implicit bias by police officers who equate being black with being criminal. Thus, through these shootings, a common theme arises: fear, criminality, and blackness.

Most of all, this theme of criminality and blackness often comes up in specific conversations about gun violence in Chicago. For example, former President Trump often brought up the high rates of violence in Chicago describing the black neighborhoods and black residents who are most impacted as "living in hell because it's so dangerous. You walk down the street, you get shot". President Trump then, in turn, called for "law and order" and more aggressive policing or tough on crime tactics to combat, what he describes, the "carnage" in Chicago (Abt 2010, 123). Simply painting Chicago's black neighborhoods as "dangerous" and full of "carnage" and bullets re-enforces the image or stereotype of blackness and criminality.

Thus, anytime crime and black Americans are discussed in the same sentence this common arises yet again.

Critically, this focus on black crime and the criminalization of black Americans is nothing new. In her book *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness*, Michelle Alexander recounts the rise of "law and order" rhetoric and argues that, despite statistics that say otherwise, black Americans have and continue to be criminalized. First, dating back to slavery, this trope began with whites seeking to create fear around newly freed black men by repeatedly accusing them of raping white women. As a result, black men began to be seen as dangerous predators (Alexander 2010, 28). Next, after the Civil Rights Movement, Southern segregationists first began using this narrative to mobilize opposition to black progress. Traditional forms of racial discrimination and control were no longer legal and less socially acceptable. A new way of keeping black Americans in check was needed. Thus, in response to black riots stemming from the Civil Rights Movement and rising crime rates in the 1960s, segregationists pushed a narrative of uncontrollable crime by blacks that needed to be brought to heel. In the 1968 and 1980 presidential campaigns, Richard Nixon and Ronald Reagan both weaponized law and order rhetoric to appeal to racist Southern white voters. Employing this so-called Southern Strategy, both candidates pushed narratives that crime was rampant and a crackdown on dangerous "predators" was needed (Alexander 2010, 112). According to Nixon, this high-crime message was always meant to be about "those Negroes" (Alexander 2010, 114). Moving away from explicit racism, this narrative took a colorblind lens with "black" being replaced with "criminal" (Alexander 2010, 105-106).

For Alexander, this law-and-order narrative took a catastrophic turn when Reagan announced the war on drugs in 1982. During his campaign, he had promised to crack down on crime; the war on drugs would be his way of fulling his promise to the South. Coded anti-black appeals continued through a massive media campaign, as Reagan justified his position by claiming drug use and crime were out of control in black, inner-city neighborhoods. Media ran thousands of stories about black "crack whores" and "gangbangers" (Alexander 2010, 120). This project promoted the stereotype that black men are dangerous "predators" who are a part of an "inferior and criminal subculture" (Alexander 2010, 120). Reagan's crackdown included harsh sentencing laws for drug crimes and an aggressive policing strategy that overwhelmingly targeted black neighborhoods. Moreover, Reagan claimed that poverty and high rates of crime and drug use in black neighborhoods were due to black culture (Alexander 2010, 120). Bill Clinton continued this war on drugs in the 1990s by deploying similar rhetoric and introducing even harsher sentencing laws and policing policies for drug crimes. Thus, Alexander contends that equating criminality with blackness was not only a way for politicians to win the South but also a way for whites who opposed black progress to continue to voice racist and discriminatory ideas without stepping outside the bounds of mainstream discourse (Alexander 2010, 123).

According to Alexander, this war directly resulted in the mass incarceration of black Americans where, in 2010, the U.S. reached an incarceration rate of 750 per 100,00 citizens. Since the war on drugs overwhelmingly targeted black neighborhoods, a massive chunk of those incarcerated are blacks. In Washington, D.C., for example, an astounding three out of every four black men are incarcerated at some point in their lifetimes (Alexander 2010, 7-8). Additionally, in Chicago, counting those inside and outside prison, black men who possess a

felony is roughly equal to 55% of the black adult male population in the city (Alexander 2010, 287). Furthermore, the racism and hypocrisy of this war become even more apparent when one pauses to recognize that "people of all colors use and sell drugs at remarkably similar rates" (Alexander 2010, 8). With this in mind, Alexander argues the mass incarceration of blacks is the newest form of racial discrimination and control; similar to Jim Crow laws, it strips blacks of their rights, making them "permanent second class" citizens to the extent that, upon release, they are permanently marginalized under the law, as their criminal records often bar them from voting, getting a job, and accessing housing (Alexander 2010, 5). As a result, through the ostensibly color-blind lens of mass incarceration, white supremacy lives on and black Americans are victims of this racist drug apparatus (Alexander 2010, 5).

Alexander's argument lays bare how the stigma of blackness and criminality has been created through the war on drugs. What is missing, however, from Alexander's analysis is gun violence in poor black communities. Indeed, in cities like Chicago, black violent crime is clearly a problem. In her book, Alexander briefly acknowledges violent crime in black communities but states that she will take a singular focus on non-violent drug crimes and a criminal justice system that has caused "incalculable harm to millions" (Alexander 2010, xxii). While I completely agree with Alexander's argument, I believe it is critically important that we deploy a similar analysis of violent crime in black communities. In not addressing black violent crime, Alexander leaves herself open to the same racist, black-crime narrative that she deconstructs, in the sense that high gun-violence rates in cities like Chicago appear to vindicate the war on drug's stereotype of black Americans as dangerous, violent criminals. Indeed, as we have seen, this narrative is prevalent today in the police shootings of unarmed black men and the what-

about-black-on-black-crime response to the BLM protests. Moreover, like Reagan's media campaign to justify the war on drugs and President Trump's law and order rhetoric, the country is awash in horrific media stories like Yasmin's, which further reinforce and portray blacks and their communities as criminal and dangerous.

With this in mind, I will build on Alexander's work, deploying a similar argument but taking a singular focus on black violent crime in Chicago. In the same vein as Alexander, I argue that black Chicagoans are victims of an inherently unequal and racist system in which gun violence is a symptom of past and current racism. In other words, taking a colorblind approach, I will ask how, in the absence of overt racial discrimination, white supremacy continues to endure and shape outcomes for black Americans in U.S. society, as evidenced in the case of Chicago. The U.S. has a dark history of racial discrimination, often perpetrated through ostensibly colorblind policies by the state, that created the racial divide and racial inequalities we see in black communities in cities like Chicago. As we will see, many of the inequalities created by this racist past are directly driving gun violence in Chicago's black neighborhoods. Thus, in taking this approach, I hope to deconstruct further the narrative of black criminality by suggesting that any human being, regardless of race, living in the conditions of Chicago's black neighborhoods could be driven to violence.

For many, the idea that black Americans are not inherently criminal seems obvious and goes without saying. As a result, they may ask why then is a historical approach still so important and why bother deconstructing the narrative of black criminality? The answer lays in the solutions to Chicago's extreme gun violence. As we have seen, Chicago's black communities possess entrenched inequalities that are fueling the violence. The only way to truly stop the

violence in the long run is ending these inequalities through measures like investment and de-segregation so that black Chicagoans are not faced with extreme poverty and a lack of opportunities. Frequently, when discussing policy solutions to gun violence, the history of discrimination that created these racial inequalities are left out. When such history is absent, one sees these inequalities and trends as naturally occurring. As a result, the re-investment measures needed to undo the systemic racial inequalities driving gun violence appear like a handout. You may see these inequalities as a concerning issue but, without a historical approach, you may not see why reparations are in order. Therefore, the urgency and justification needed to mobilize the major changes required to fix these inequalities are absent. However, with a historical approach, one begins to see these racial inequalities as a direct creation of racial oppression and, in turn, inherently unjust. Investment measures to undo trends like extreme poverty in black Chicago neighborhoods no longer appear like a handout, but long overdue compensation for past harm.

Moreover, in the short term, as I will argue later on, measures such as violence intervention and prevention programs are needed to stop the violence. These programs require working directly with those who are most likely to be and are currently perpetrators of gun violence. In working with perpetrators, anti-violence programs seek to stop violence at its source by addressing cycles of trauma and poverty while also providing job training, jobs, and life coaching. This sort of work requires seeing perpetrators of violence as more than just criminals but rather complex individuals who are both perpetrators of serious harm and victims of a racist divide. With a historical approach, this kind of perspective can be achieved as it humanizes perpetrators of violence. Indeed, understanding that decades of racial oppression

created the inequalities driving people to violence can help one see black gun violence perpetrators as more than just criminals but victims of a racist divide. Without this historical context being put in conversation with the inequalities driving the violence, tough on crime solutions appear reasonable as perpetrators are seen as simply dangerous criminals where the only option is to lock them up and throw away the key. Thus, a historical approach is critical as the break-down of the criminal and victim binary needed to see these types of solutions as rational will not occur.

Therefore, in employing a historically informed racial justice lens to Chicago's gun violence, I hope to spur new action and conversation among Chicagoans. For far too long the violence, inequalities and racism that created adverse conditions in black communities have gone ignored in Chicago. For years many residents and politicians have seen story after story like Yasmin's and simply accepted it as the norm or seen toughness on crime as the answer. Yes, gun violence in Chicago's black communities is undeniably a significant problem. However, we need to completely re-imagine the way in which we talk about and propose solutions to the problem. We must begin to see black gun violence and black perpetrators of such violence as a direct result of past and current systemic racism rather than simply and falsely as dangerous criminals. It is time for us as a city to acknowledge this past and take action. It is time for us as a country to acknowledge the state-sanctioned violence and discrimination against black Americans and their communities. This first requires acknowledgement of Chicago's racist past, which is a perquisite to any accurate perspective on violence in black communities. Finally, I argue that, considering Chicago's record of creating the racial inequalities driving black violence, the only equitable response is reparations.

Research Question

Accordingly, my thesis will be guided by several key questions. Why is urban gun violence in Chicago so highly concentrated in and driven by extremely poor and disadvantaged black neighborhoods? How has Chicago's history of racial discrimination created or contributed to these factors? How do the various explanations for high rates of violence in black neighborhoods and the solutions proposed change when one takes into account Chicago's racist past? While I focus solely on black gun violence in Chicago, it is important to acknowledge that gun violence and systemic inequalities affect other minority groups in Chicago, such as Latinx communities. My research questions, however, simply centers on black neighborhoods in order to address the stigma of blackness and criminality and the fact that black residents comprise the majority of victims of Chicago's gun violence. With this in mind, I hypothesize that understanding the problem of gun violence through Chicago's racist past sensitizes us to short term solutions, like addressing cycles of poverty and violence, other than simply tough on crime measures. Moreover, I anticipate that this historical approach will make the long-term investment in black communities necessary for undoing the entrenched inequalities begin to appear not as undeserved handouts, but reparations for decades of harm.

Research Design

In order to answer my research questions, I narrowly focus on Chicago and track the city's history of racial discrimination in housing, segregation, and policing. After tracing this history, I show how this discrimination created the racial inequalities we see in Chicago today and how, in turn, these inequalities directly drive gun violence in black communities. Finally, I conclude by exploring public-policy solutions to urban gun violence. Most importantly, taking

into account how Chicago's racist past created the inequalities that fuel gun violence in black neighborhoods, I illustrate how the way in which we look at and approach explanations for high rates of black violence and the solutions one deploys change.

Literature Review

Since the 1980s, many scholars have attempted to answer one seemingly simple question: why are violent crime and homicide rates so high in the minority neighborhoods of many U.S. cities? Historically, in answering this question, scholars have mostly focused on violent crime in general, with more recent studies taking a singular focus on gun violence and homicide rates. What is missing, however, from the current scholarship's explanations for high rates of black gun violence is a historical approach. Specific inequalities and trends, such as extreme poverty and distrust in the police, are directly linked to high rates of black violence but an explanation of where those driving factors come from is frequently left out. With this in mind, the current literature can be divided into three distinct schools.

The first grouping consists of works that specifically blame poor social conditions for the violence and draw on a theory known as social disorganization theory. In their book, Ruth Peterson and Lauren Krivo (2010) seek to understand why violent crime is so focused within minority neighborhoods by examining crime data from neighborhoods in 91 different U.S. cities. According to the authors, social disorganization theory sees high crime rates persisting in certain neighborhoods due to extreme social inequalities, such as poverty, that create instability, which, in turn, makes it almost impossible for these neighborhoods to control crime. Most important is the book's main organizing concept: the racial-spatial divide. For Peterson and Krivo, this divide is a structural arrangement in which blacks, Latinos, and whites are

segregated from each other with extreme differences in their social and economic circumstances (Peterson and Krivo 2010, 6-7). Drawing on structural racism theory, the authors see U.S. society as racialized, with social and economic conditions favoring whites and disadvantaging black Americans. In their study, Krivo and Peterson find strong evidence of this reality, with black neighborhoods highly segregated from white neighborhoods and containing extreme social inequalities that almost no white neighborhood possesses. Thus, they contend that black violent-crime rates are not due to such communities being "more criminally oriented" but to the fact that these communities contain crime-encouraging conditions that create social disorganization and, in turn, make it impossible to control crime. In contrast, white neighborhoods possess low violent-crime rates simply due to their favorable social conditions.

In tracking the implications of segregation, Peterson and Krivo's concept of a racial-spatial divide defining U.S. cities across the country will be a key concept throughout my thesis. Indeed, contextualizing the racial-spatial divide concept in the case of Chicago will shed light on the racial inequalities that define the city and how black neighborhoods differ drastically from white neighborhoods. Moreover, the authors' use of structural race theory in their explanation will also be an important building concept as I seek to show how Chicago's black neighborhoods suffer structural inequalities that push black youth into gun violence. Outlining this structured reality will be a powerful way to show that any child, regardless of race, growing up in this environment could descend into criminality. Thus, through their study, Peterson and Krivo not only provide evidence of this structured racial reality but also, through social disorganization theory, provide an important way of thinking through the drivers of gun violence in Chicago,

including racial inequalities. The authors do not, however, describe the U.S. racist history that created the racial-spatial divide. What produced this racialized reality? How did cities become so racially segregated? These are key questions that remain unanswered; answering them will be my original contribution.

Similar to Peterson and Krivo, several other studies deploy social disorganization theory to connect racial segregation and violent crime. First, Feldmeyer (2010) explores how racial segregation has affected homicide rates in black and Latino neighborhoods in New York and California. Feldmeyer theorizes that racial segregation has indirectly contributed to this rise in violence by creating and concentrating social inequalities within minority neighborhoods. These inequalities are found at high rates only in black communities and, in turn, socially isolate black residents from mainstream society, making it difficult for them to socially organize to fight off crime. Feldmeyer finds that black segregation is closely linked to high levels of concentrated inequality, which is in turn significantly correlated to high rates of black homicide (Feldmeyer 2010, 559-603).

Second, Jones-Webb and Wall (2008) look at the relationship between racial homicide gaps in ten different U.S. cities and social disadvantages such as unemployment, low household income, low educational attainment, and family instability. Unlike Feldmeyer, the authors then ask whether, after controlling for these disadvantages, homicide rates in black and Latino communities would drop. Jones-Webb and Wall find that controlling for social disadvantages significantly reduces homicide rates in black and Latino neighborhoods. For the authors, this finding bolsters the hypothesis that homicide rates may be due to youth feeling they have little to lose in engaging in violent crime; according to this rationale, because they live in

neighborhoods with few opportunities, these youth have low expectations for the future. Thus, similar to Krivo and Peterson, the authors contend that social disadvantages that encourage crime are to blame, rather than any supposedly inherent criminality among black and Latino Americans (Jones-Webb and Wall 2008, 661-664).

Third, Shihadeh and Flynn (1996) also look at the effects of racial segregation and racial inequalities on black violent crime in cities across the U.S. Briefly reviewing redlining, the authors explain how this practice segregated and isolated black neighborhoods. Additionally, one unique contribution was their explanation of the concentration of class among black neighborhoods. According to Shihadeh and Flynn, the decline in housing values that was created by redlining drove black middle-class families out of neighborhoods or down in socio-economic status. As a result, many black neighborhoods in large U.S. cities face extreme inequalities and are surrounded by many similarly situated neighborhoods and families. This magnifies the isolation and crime-encouraging conditions within black neighborhoods to the extent that poor black families do not have middle-class neighborhoods or families to act as a buffer from such conditions (Shihadeh and Flynn 1996, 1330-1334).

Lastly, Sampson and Morenoff (2001) look again at high homicide rates in black neighborhoods but, building on social disorganization theory, offer an alternative theory. This theory, known as "collective efficacy", sees a neighborhood ability to control crime based on "shared expectations and conjoint ability of…residents to act as a local social control on crime". Such collective efficacy is measured by evaluating the strength and presence of social cohesion, social ties, and community or voluntary organizations in a neighborhood. The authors hypothesize that the level of collective efficacy in a neighborhood will inversely affect its

homicide rate. Looking at homicides in Chicago between 1996 and 1998, Sampson and Morenoff found a strong inverse relationship between collective efficacy and homicide rates. Indeed, according to their analysis, 72% of Chicago neighborhoods with high collective efficacy levels had extremely low homicide rates. In contrast, 75% of the neighborhood hot spots for homicide had low levels of collective efficacy. Moreover, similar to Shihadeh and Flynn, Sampson and Morenoff found that, regardless of collective efficacy rates, a neighborhood's homicide rates were lower the closer it was to a neighborhood that had high collective efficacy. Most importantly, this relationship was found only in black Chicago neighborhoods (Shihadeh and Flynn 2001, 535-541).

These four sources, taken together, not only lay out specific theories to draw on in understanding the violence, but also provide further evidence of clear connections between racial segregation and violent crime. Moreover, these authors point out key inequalities that could be driving crime and therefore should be examined more closely, such as unemployment and poverty. Critically, this literature underscores an essential concept in understanding what is driving the violence. As stated by Feldmeyer, racial segregation is indirectly responsible for the high black violent crime rate, as it directly created the social inequalities that, according to his studies, are directly correlated with such violence. Thus, in my thesis, I will seek to build on Feldmeyer's analysis as I attempt to show how certain inequalities created by racial discrimination are driving violence in Chicago. These sources, however, fail to outline exactly how black neighborhoods came to be defined by these extreme inequalities. Shihadeh and Flynn touch briefly on housing discrimination against blacks through measures such as redlining, but do not go into much depth. Lastly, most of the current literature focuses on

violent crime more generally, not gun violence. I will depart from these previous studies by taking a singular focus on gun violence.

The next group of scholars that seek to explain high violent crime in black neighborhoods see a culture of violence as an important causal factor. More specifically, these scholars see violence used as a defense mechanism and a way to impose social control. Analyzing black Philadelphia neighborhoods, Anderson (1994) sees this culture of violence present in what he calls "the code of the streets". He defines this code as an "informal set of rules that govern interpersonal public behavior". In his study, Anderson finds that this street code emerges in response to severe inequalities faced by inner-city black neighborhoods. These inequalities create a situation of low social control and instability, in which young people feel completely alienated from mainstream society and fall victim to "forces beyond their control". Moreover, Anderson sees this street code arising from a lack of faith in the police and the justice system. Black neighborhoods do not see police as a reliable source of protection and, as a result, feel that they are left to defend themselves. This outlook effectively encourages violence; "respect" in the form of standing in the community becomes a valued good. With no social control and no police protection, a person's reputation becomes a way to protect himself or herself. As a result, violence is seen as a way to gain and maintain this respect. Therefore, if threatened, violence is a legitimate response under the street code, as residents see it as their best or only option to solve disputes and defend themselves. Thus, even those who resist this code are forced to abide by it as a means of survival (Anderson 1994, 82-83).

Fagan and Wilkinson (1998) find further support for this culture of violence in their qualitative study and survey black males in two neighborhoods in New York City. In seeking to understand why gun violence is so concentrated among young black males, the authors find that their respondents carry firearms for safety, in response to an "ecology of danger" in their communities. These youth see their neighborhoods as unsafe or unstable environments and see other youth as armed and ready to use violence. As a result, Fagan and Wilkinson explain that guns are seen by the respondents as a way to gain status, project toughness or power, and dominate those around them. Factoring in gender, Fagan and Wilkinson argue that guns and violence are used in these contexts by young males to "construct violent identities" that are based on traditional masculine traits such as toughness. Moreover, men who do not conform to this tough identity are often attacked. Thus, like Anderson, the authors conclude that a culture of violent identities and actual violence emerges as youth seek the status that they believe will protect them in an unstable environment (Fagan and Wilkinson 1998, 107-175).

Additionally, Kubrin and Weitzer (2004) find that in St. Louis, which is highly segregated by race, retaliatory killings were extremely common and concentrated in disadvantaged black neighborhoods (163). After analyzing narrative accounts of homicide incidents, Kubrin and Weitzer find support for a culture of violence. Mistrust of police in these communities drives people to "settle their own scores" and seek justice on their own through retaliatory killings. Moreover, they see evidence that violence is supported as a legitimate response to quarrels within the community and, due to the overlap of inequalities and these killings, contend that retaliatory killings are used to maintain respect (Kubrin and Weitzer 2004, 178).

Papachristos and his colleagues observe a similar trend in their analysis of violent street gangs. According to Papachristos et al. (2013), violence serves a particular function for gangs. He writes, "Violence serves a form of street justice, a mechanism of social control…that corrects a perceived wrong, addresses a threat, or saves face" (Papachristos et al. 2013, 420). When a gang is wronged, retaliating with violence is seen as a way to show that its members will protect themselves and that gang-justice will be exacted for a wrong. Moreover, gang membership and violence by gangs are ways to gain status within the neighborhood (Papachristos et al. 2013, 420-421). Additionally, returning to social disorganization theory, Papachristos and Kirk (2006) theorize that violent gangs arise in response to the "weakening of social institutions and mechanisms of social control" such as the "inefficiency of schools" (Papachristos and Kirk 2006, 81). In this environment, young boys form gangs as a way to "create a society for themselves" and establish control. Looking at Chicago, Papachristos and Kirk find evidence of this trend: the higher levels of social control a neighborhood has, the lower levels of gang violence (Papachristos and Kirk 2006, 81).

Lastly, Abt (2019), builds on these authors by putting a name to this observed distrust in law enforcement: legal cynicism. According to Abt, legal cynicism is "a deep-seated belief in the incompetence, illegitimacy, and unresponsiveness of the criminal justice system" (Abt 2019, 62-63). In response to this distrust, communities do not cooperate with police and resort to "self-justice". Most importantly, Abt departs from previous scholars is that he tracks some of the history behind this legal cynicism. Abt looks at the case of Ferguson, Missouri, seeking to understand why, after the death of Michael Brown at the hands of the police, there was an aggressive spike in gun violence in the city and surrounding cities. He articulates how, months

after Brown's death, a Justice Department investigation revealed years of the widespread use of force, unconstitutional stops of young black men by police, and wrongful arrests, mostly of the city's poor, black residents. Moreover, the report found that local judges and politicians encouraged the mass arrests and ticketing of the city's poor, black residents to solve Ferguson's debt problem. Thus, for Abt, the mass protests and gun violence that followed Michael Brown's death were due to a deep legal cynicism within black communities resulting from this corrupt history (Abt 2019, 19-55). Turning to Chicago, Sampson and Bartush (1998) find support for Abt's findings in their analysis of Chicago neighborhoods. Their key finding is that neighborhoods with extreme, concentrated inequalities had the highest levels of legal cynicism and that this relationship was only present in black communities.

Theories surrounding cultures of violence and legal cynicism, taken together, provide another important approach to accounting for high rates of violence in black neighborhoods. Understanding residents' reasons for the use of violence, as well as how that violence arose in response to unreliable police protection and social disorganization that reflects inequalities, is powerful. Indeed, applying this culture of violence to Chicago will allow me to show that gun violence is often perceived as a reasonable response to the environment people find themselves in, not because black Americans are inherently criminal. Moreover, similar to the first school, many of the scholars, except Abt, fail to track the history of poor and discriminatory policing that led to black communities' distrust in law enforcement. The power of Abt's work is that it shows the *why* behind community members' cynicism and violence. Therefore, building on Abt, I will track Chicago's history of police discrimination, attempting to shed light on the

origins of this cynicism and why some black Chicagoans believe that they must sometimes resort to violence.

Finally, a key point brought up by Abt must be noted. He discusses how a singular focus on root causes as an explanation for gun violence in black communities is misleading. He writes, "Root causes do not explain why crime and especially violence concentrate among small numbers of places and people. Many are poor, few are criminals, and fewer still are killers. While most murderers may be poor, the overwhelming majority of the poor are not murderers" (Abt 2019, 24). When discussing violence in Chicago, many people criminalize entire communities, for example, casting the entire South Side of Chicago and its black communities as dangerous and violent. Applying Abt's framework to Chicago's violence will enable me to deconstruct this narrative. Additionally, Abt illustrates that one must take a more holistic approach that includes *both* social conditions and cultural violence explanations when seeking to understand what is driving the violence in black inner-city neighborhoods. Thus, I will apply both explanations in my analysis, as no one single theory can explain violence within marginalized black communities.

The third and final school of sources are those scholars who have taken approaches that are arguably racist and therefore problematic. This school is sufficiently represented by what has become known as the Moynihan Report, titled "The Negro Family: the Case for Federal Action", written in 1965 by Assistant Labor Secretary Daniel Patrick Moynihan. According to Gans (2001), this report blamed criminality and violence in black neighborhoods on a "tangle of pathology" or, in other words, black culture. For Moynihan, this tangle of pathology included fatherless households and "single-parent or female-headed" households as a cause of black

poverty and black delinquency. Gans articulates how, within the report, Moynihan even called for black families and black communities to essentially "pull itself up by its familial bootstraps" and fix itself (Gans 2001, 316-217).

Looking at the Moynihan Report, we see exactly why tracking the history beyond racial inequalities is so important. There is no question that black communities have high rates of poverty, unemployment, and violence. Moreover, the current literature has extensively documented this reality and how it drives violence in black communities. What is extremely problematic, however, is failing to contextualize these inequalities within the history of racial discrimination that created them and instead, essentially and simplistically blame black culture. Indeed, without this historical context, many have attributed the extreme poverty and high unemployment in black communities to laziness or another flaw in black culture. As a result, people conclude that these conditions are of black Americans' own doing and call for them to simply work harder or "pull themselves up by the bootstraps". In failing to track the history of racial discrimination, the current literature on violence in black communities leaves itself vulnerable to these racist critiques. Explaining the *how* and the *why* behind these inequalities will show that crime and inequalities within black communities are a symptom of racism, not a reflection of black culture. Therefore, in tracking Chicago's history of racial discrimination, I will seek to fill this gap in the literature and show that gun violence in Chicago is not due to inherent criminality among black Americans. It is, instead, the creation of a racist past.

Methodology

The methodology of the paper will be one of mixed methods in which I use both qualitative and quantitative studies. Originally, I had planned on conducting in-depth

interviews in Chicago, gathering firsthand accounts from community members, perpetrators of gun violence, and activists. Due to COVID, this is no longer a possibility, so I will draw from existing studies conducted by various organizations and scholars. For the quantitative studies, I will bring in works that seek to find statistical correlations between legal cynicism and violence or between specific inequalities – such as poverty and unemployment – and gun violence. Through these quantitative studies, I will explore whether and how certain inequalities in black neighborhoods created by Chicago's discriminatory past are driving the violence. For the qualitative studies, I will consider studies that include interviews of perpetrators of gun violence – specifically gang members – and community members. Like the quantitative studies, these firsthand accounts will allow me to see whether trend or inequalities created by Chicago's past are leading people to pick up a gun.

With this in mind, my thesis will proceed by first detailing the history of racial housing discrimination and segregation in Chicago and, most importantly, explain how this history created the racial divide and inequalities we see in Chicago's black neighborhoods today. Secondly, I will outline Chicago's history of police discrimination and abuse against black Chicagoans. Then, in both of these chapters, I will put this history in conversation with specific studies that explain why gun violence is so high in Chicago's black neighborhoods. Here, I will seek to directly link factors identified in these studies as casual factors for high rates of gun violence to Chicago's history of racial discrimination. In doing so, I will illustrate how Chicago's history directly created the trends identified by scholars as driving the city's gun violence. Critically, in both chapters, this connection will position me to argue that Chicago's gun violence is a symptom of a racist past, not inherent criminality among black Chicagoans or black culture.

Moreover, throughout these chapters, I will evaluate how, when one takes a historical approach to gun violence, the way in which one looks at explanations for high rates of violence presented by scholars changes. Lastly, in my final analytical chapter, I will conclude with policy recommendations that follow from my analysis. Most importantly, I will analyze how the solutions to Chicago's gun violence change in light of its racist history.

Chapter 2

Chicago's History of Housing Discrimination and Racial Segregation

In seeking to track Chicago's history of racial discrimination, there is only one place to begin: segregation. As we saw in the literature review, current authors have clearly identified specific structural inequalities, such as poverty and neighborhood instability, that are casual factors for high rates of gun violence and other types of violent crime in black neighborhoods. Critically, however, simply showing correlation is not enough when seeking to truly understand Chicago's gun violence problem and why it is so concentrated in black neighborhoods. Indeed, the studies outlined in the literature review leave out Chicago's history of segregation and housing discrimination that, as we will see, created the racial inequalities that are predictors for high gun-violence rates. Without this historical perspective we are therefore left with an incomplete picture. Thus, this chapter will seek to complete the picture of Chicago's gun violence by putting studies that show structural inequalities are closely correlated with high rates of gun violence in conversation with Chicago's history of housing discrimination and segregation. I will specifically focus on a study conducted by Sampson et al. that provides this structural explanation for high rates of violence in black Chicago neighborhoods.

With this in mind, this chapter will proceed in six parts. First, I will detail Sampson et al.'s study and re-define the unequal reality black Chicagoans are living in today. For parts two through four, this chapter will seek to cover three distinct periods of racial housing discrimination and segregation in Chicago's history. I will begin with a period that spans from roughly 1890 to 1921. These years were pivotal in establishing initial racial lines and patterns of discrimination in neighborhoods. Real estate agents, local government, and white residents deployed various tools to keep black residents out of white neighborhoods. Next, I will outline the period from the 1940s to the mid- to late-1960s. During these years, thousands of black

Americans migrated from the American South to Chicago, seeking to escape white oppression in the forms of segregation and housing discrimination, among other injustices. Blacks arrived in Chicago only to find new tactics of segregation and housing discrimination used by local government and real estate agents there. For the first time, however, the federal government itself got into the act, playing its own important role in perpetrating and exacerbating this discrimination. The third period I address is the more recent segregation and discriminatory policies of the 1990s to the present, with emphasis on the local actors, such as real estate agents, who yet again played a central role. Against the backdrop of these three periods, I will contend that this history created the inequalities we see in Chicago's black neighborhoods today. To conclude, I will argue that our understanding of the basic nature of Chicago's gun violence changes once the impact of Chicago's discriminatory past is laid bare and partnered with the insights of Sampson et al.'s structural study.

After putting this history in conversation with Sampson et al.'s study, I argue, two important insights follow at the end of this chapter. First, the way in which we look at Sampson et al.'s study will change. Without this historical context, we fail to see *why* and *how* these inequalities in black neighborhoods that correlate so closely with violence came to be. Problematic arguments that black culture is to blame for the violence and the inequalities are therefore not fully quashed. For example, former TV host Bill O'Reilly stated, "much of the violent crime in America is being committed right now by black men…there is a violent subculture in the African American community that should be exposed and confronted" (Abt 2019, 158). Yes, in providing a structural explanation for high rates of violence in black neighborhoods, studies like Sampson et al.'s do debunk this racist narrative. With a historical

context, however, we completely shatter this "black culture" explanation as we recognize that black Chicagoans are disadvantaged for a reason, and that reason is white racism. Thus, this study will shift the perspective on Chicago's gun violence from a simply structural one to a truly antiracist one. A holistic picture will be provided, showing everyday residents and lawmakers that we cannot truly understand the problem and how it came to be without a historical approach.

Additionally, this antiracist perspective will also allow us to debunk the stigma of blackness and criminality. As outlined in the introductory chapter, Michelle Alexander demonstrates how, dating back to the era of slavery, newly freed black men were depicted by whites as dangerous predators who serially raped white women (Alexander 2010, 28). Moreover, through the war on drugs, President Nixon and President Reagan pushed a narrative of rampant crime and drug use in black inner-city neighborhoods. The two presidents then used this high-crime narrative to justify harsh measures, such as aggressive policing strategies that focused heavily on communities of color, to combat crime. This became a way for white racists to voice their displeasure towards blacks without being openly racist (Alexander 2010, 123). Further, former President Trump continued this "law and order" rhetoric by calling for more tough-on-crime policies to combat the "carnage" of gun violence in places like Chicago. He described black Chicagoans as "living in hell because it's so dangerous. You walk down the street, you get shot" (Abt 2019, 161). By combing a historical perspective that explains the racist history behind black Chicago inequalities today with Sampson et al.'s structural explanation for high rates of gun violence, this study will effectively attack the narrative of criminalization. It will demonstrate that (returning to my central argument) high rates of gun

violence in black neighborhoods are due to black Chicagoans being victims of a racist divide created by a racist past. One result is to force individuals such as former President Trump to think critically before simply criminalizing black neighborhoods. In effect, the study seeks to disentangle blackness from criminality.

Lastly, after contextualizing Sampson et al.'s study within Chicago's racist past, the policy solutions that are needed will appear more possible. As we will see in Chapter 4, the most effective strategy to stop the violence right now is violence intervention and prevention programs. Since, according to Abt (2019), relatively few individuals are actually responsible for committing the overwhelming majority of the violence, these programs call for selectively targeting and working with those most likely to be victims and perpetrators of gun violence. Without a historical approach, these invaluable anti-violence efforts are too easily overlooked in discussions of public policy solutions. Indeed, in response to a 2010 Chicago Police Department violence-intervention initiative, many Chicago news outlets as well as Republican state and city lawmakers reacted with horror. One city councilmen stated, "I can't believe we're sitting down and negotiating with urban terrorists who are killing our kids with guns and drugs on the streets" (Papachristos and Kirk 2015, 525). In providing a historical perspective, the simplistic and negative "criminal" label will be deconstructed to demonstrate the effects of the decades of housing discrimination that created the inequalities contributing to the violence. At the end of this chapter, I argue that this same city councilman will no longer see gun-violence perpetrators simplistically as criminals, but, in a more nuanced and honest way, as victims of a racist past. This recognition will, in turn, rationalize the anti-violence strategies that are essential to healing communities.

Further, serious long-term investment and desegregation are needed to eradicate the entrenched inequalities in Chicago's black neighborhoods. This, I argue, must be done through reparations. Without unpacking the full contents of Chicago's racial divide, gun violence will continue. Sampson et al.'s structural explanation is not enough to make the major action needed possible. Indeed, without a historical approach, these structural factors described by Sampson et al. might appear to occur naturally, giving investment or government programs to combat these inequalities the false appearance of a handout. By the end of this chapter, however, we will see that reparations and serious investment are in order because Chicago's past housing discrimination and segregation *created* the causal factors of gun violence in black neighborhoods. Most importantly, we will recognize that white Chicagoans have benefitted at black Chicagoans expense from this discriminatory past, both economically and in terms of life-chances. The effect of this argument will be to garner the political capital necessary to finally convince white Chicagoans that it is time to fix a problem they, in part, had a role in creating.

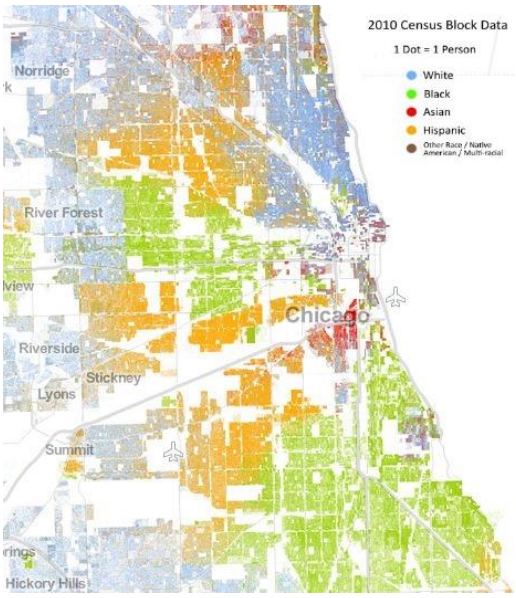
It is important, however, to first quickly define what I mean by "segregation" and "housing discrimination." I define housing discrimination as the denial by a public or private entity of fair access to the sale or rent of housing to a person because of the person's race. For example, a real estate agent or governmental agency that bars blacks from buying or renting in a particular area while letting whites do so has committed housing discrimination. I define segregation as the separation of white and black Chicagoans. There are various types of segregation, but I particularly have in mind the race-based neighborhood or housing segregation that occurred not naturally but through forceful action and policy. Discrimination

in housing and segregation are, in my view, interconnected, as residential segregation is often the *result* of housing discrimination.

Chicago's Present Day Unequal Racial Divide

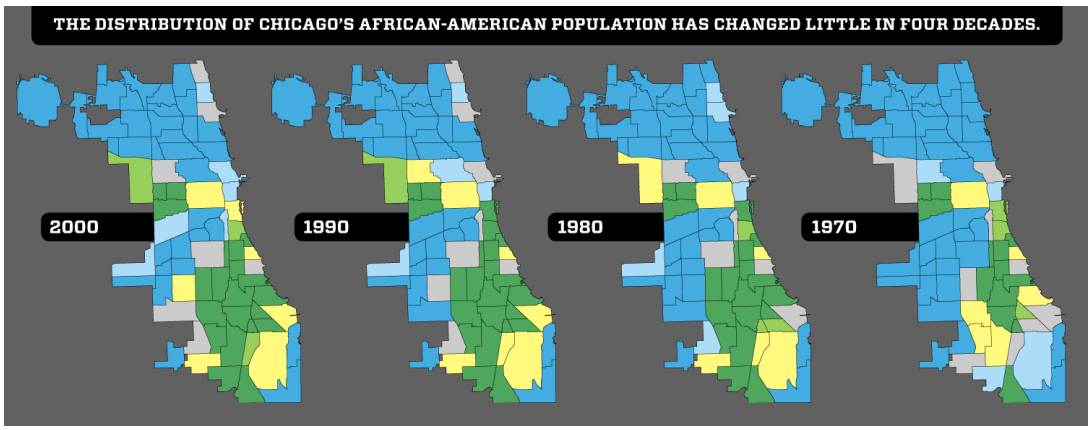
As we saw in the introductory chapter, Chicago today is extremely segregated based on race. Indeed, using the most recent census data from 2010, **Figure #1** reflects this divided reality. Black Chicagoans, represented as the green dots, are still concentrated almost entirely on the South Side and West Side (Pagano 2014). Further looking at **Figure #2**, it becomes clear that Chicago's extreme racial segregation has changed little over time, with blacks, represented by the green, clustered in select South and West Side areas for several decades. In contrast, whites, represented by blue, reside mostly on the North Side (Bogira 2011). Moreover, we also saw how, in addition to race, economic status and opportunity also divide Chicago. Citywide in 2018, Chicago's black poverty and unemployment rates were 34% and 16.2%, respectively. White Chicagoans, on the other hand, have only a 4.7% unemployment rate and a 9.7% poverty rate (Semuels 2018). Worst of all, high rates of segregation concentrate such inequalities. For example, in 2015 Riverdale and Fuller Park, both majority-black neighborhoods on the South Side, had poverty rates of 61% and 56%, respectively (Hertz 2016). Thus, today's Chicago is highly segregated based on race: The black population is clustered on the South Side and West Side, where, with regard to poverty and unemployment, blacks suffer from concentrated and extreme inequalities vis-a-vis whites.

Figure #1



Source: https://lawprofessors.typepad.com/land_use/2014/09/a-novel-strategy-for-holding-banks-accountable-for-blight.html

Figure #2



Source: https://www.chicagoreader.com/chicago/chicago-politics-segregation-african-american-black-white-hispanic-latino-population-census-community/Content?oid=3221712

Additionally, the introductory chapter illustrated how gun violence also heavily concentrates in these highly disadvantaged South Side and West Side neighborhoods. Indeed, according to Chicago CRED, the city's leading antiviolence organization, of Chicago's 77 neighborhoods, 15 majority-black areas on the South and West Sides are responsible for 80% of

gun violence (Chicago CRED 2019). Returning to the exclusively black Fuller Park, its homicide rate in 2015 was a staggering 104 per every 100,000 residents. The majority-white North Side area of Lincoln Park, in contrast, had a homicide rate of 6 per every 100,000 in the same year. Further, we saw how many of the perpetrators of this gun violence are gang-affiliated black teens and men aged 17 to 26 (Chicago CRED 2019). As a result, despite comprising only 4% of the city's population, black Chicagoans aged 15 to 34 make up over half of the city's gun violence victims. Whites, in contrast, only comprise 5% of shooting victims (University of Chicago Crime Lab 2017). Thus, violence and inequalities heavily overlap with race in Chicago. Most of all, this overlap shows how black and white Chicagoans are living in completely different realities. Black residents are heavily isolated in extremely disadvantaged and violent communities. White residents live in mostly white areas characterized by low poverty, high opportunity, and almost no violence.

Looking now at Sampson et al.'s study, the authors show how concentrated poverty and what they call "collective efficacy" – the ability of a neighborhood to organize and act as a social control on crime – correlate strongly with high homicide rates. The authors hypothesize that homicides cluster in specific Chicago neighborhoods because these areas have high levels of concentrated disadvantages, low "collective efficacy," and are close to other areas that suffer from these two phenomena. To test this theory, Sampson et al. conducted a survey of 8,872 Chicago residents in 1995 and used the 1990 census data to conduct various regression analyses (Sampson et al. 2001, 520). Sampson et al. asked survey respondents, for example, the likelihood they would look out for each other and whether their neighborhood had a network of community support organizations (Sampson et al. 2001, 521-522). To measure

concentrated disadvantages, the authors looked at "percentage of families below the poverty line…receiving public assistance" and "percentage of unemployed individuals" (Sampson et al. 2001, 528).

Ultimately, Sampson et al. found that the higher collective efficacy of a neighborhood, the lower its homicide rate. For example, 72% of Chicago neighborhoods that have high levels of collective efficacy also have low homicide levels. In contrast, 75% of the homicide hotspots in Chicago have extremely low levels of collective efficacy. Moreover, the authors found that the closer a neighborhood is to an area of low collective efficacy, the higher its homicide rate (Sampson et al. 2001, 537-538). Further, the authors' regression analyses and modeling show that concentrated disadvantage is strongly correlated with a dramatic increase in homicide rates. In particular, modeling indicated that in homicide hotspots, "a one standard deviation increase" in concentrated disadvantage triggers a "40% increase in the homicide rate" (Sampson et al. 2001, 534). Most importantly, the relationship between higher collective efficacy and concentrated disadvantage with high homicide rates was found only in black Chicago neighborhoods, not white ones (Sampson et al. 2001, 547). Thus, by deploying a structural argument, Sampson et al. clearly illustrate that current concentrated inequalities, like poverty and unemployment, are predictors of high violence rates in Chicago's black neighborhoods. Without collective efficacy, high rates of inequalities curb a neighborhood's ability to organize and act as a social control on violent crime. This, in turn, causes an increase in homicide rates. Although somewhat dated, Sampson et al.'s study and findings would certainly be replicated today as, returning to **Figure #2**, little has changed when it comes to black Chicagoans' segregation and inequalities.

Time Period #1, 1890 – 1920: Violence, Zoning Ordinances, and Job Discrimination

Where then did these inequalities come from? To answer this difficult question we must start from the beginning. In the late 1840s, the first large group of black Americans arrived in Chicago after escaping slavery in the South. The newcomers faced oppression in the form of segregation from white residents in housing and schools. Moreover, blacks were denied the right to vote and the chance to hold a job of any significant value. By 1870, the Illinois state Legislature had outlawed discrimination in public accommodations, but, in everyday practice, black Chicagoans were still virtually never treated fairly in either the housing or job market (Spear 1967, 5-6).

Despite this, some Chicago neighborhoods organically became mixed for a time, with black residents living in white neighborhoods. Conditions changed, however, when thousands of black Americans migrated north to Chicago to escape the violence and oppression of the Jim Crow South. In response to the abolishment of slavery, many white Southerners sought to maintain control over blacks through lynching's and laws mandating the separation of blacks and whites in public spaces. This resulted in a large increase in Chicago's black population from 1890 to 1910, which spurred a backlash from white politicians and ordinary residents, who advanced "anti-black doctrines" that stressed a need to "preserve the purity of the white race." This negative response from was largely fueled by whites' apprehension about imagined black infiltration of white jobs and all-white neighborhoods (Spear 1967, 7). As a result of these racist policies designed to funnel blacks away from whites, by 1910, areas that had been previously majority-white, including areas of the South Side, became majority black (Spear 1967, 42). This shift is known as "the rise of the ghetto" (Spear, 1967, 12). While for some the term "ghetto"

has negative connotations, I, like the scholarly sources I draw upon, use it neutrally to describe a result of housing segregation.

Exactly what tools of discrimination were used to create this first period of segregation? We must begin with the most important players in the housing market: real estate agents. In all-white neighborhoods like Hyde Park, residents perceived the influx of black Americans as deeply threatening. As a result, white residents created clubs and set rules for real estate agents, stating that they could not sell any properties on white blocks to blacks. If a real estate agent were to break this rule, they would be "blacklisted" (Spear 1967, 48). Rules like these severely limited where black Chicagoans of all classes could live and, as a result, they struggled to find housing. Often, their only option was among the already crowded and housing-scarce "black belt" on the South Side (Spear 1967, 47).

Second, local government officials utilized zoning rules. In the early 1900s, many city governments passed zoning ordinances that explicitly designated black and white sectors. For example, in 1910 the Baltimore City Council passed an ordinance that forbade black residents from living in majority-white neighborhoods (Rothstein 2017, 44). Chicago had also begun to implement some of these racial zoning laws, until a 1917 U.S. Supreme Court ruling found them to be a violation of the 14th Amendment (Rothstein 2017, 45). Despite this, many Midwest cities implemented zoning statutes that were ostensibly race-blind but actually intended to uphold segregation (Rothstein 2017, 49). For example, in the 1910s, the St. Louis City Planning Commission passed ordinances that only allowed single-family homes in middle-class white neighborhoods. While the statute did not explicitly target blacks, its unmistakable goal and effect was "to prevent movement into finer residential districts…by colored people." The

commission's plan worked: Like many other municipalities, St. Louis successfully segregated neighborhoods, as the vast majority of low-income black families could not afford single-family units, and those few who could were completely barred by real-estate agents from buying them (Rothstein 2017, 49).

Like St. Louis, Chicago circumvented the legal prohibition on explicit racial segregation policies by implementing several economic zoning ordinances. For example, Arlington Heights, a northern Chicago suburb, implemented a zoning rule in the mid 1920s which stated that multiunit developments could only be allowed next to or in commercial areas. This barred countless black families from the Chicago suburbs, as many could only afford or access multiunit developments. Critically, documentary evidence demonstrates that racial segregation was a central reason for these rules: Residents from across the city sent mailed letters of support for the Arlington Heights ordinance as a way to maintain racial boundaries (Rothstein 2017, 54). Furthermore, to shield white neighborhoods from industrial waste, local officials in Chicago utilized zoning rules like the one Arlington Heights, to allow "commercial or industrial facilities" only in black neighborhoods, never white ones. Indeed, the U.S. General Accounting Office found in 1983 that across dozens of major cities, including Chicago, dumps and waste treatment facilities "were more likely to be found near African American than white residential areas." Moreover, according to a 1983 report by the Commission for Racial Justice of the United Churches of Christ, the probability of waste facilities being randomly placed in black neighborhoods "was only a one-in-10,000 chance" (Rothstein 2017, 55). This choice by Chicago government officials to shield white neighborhoods further created ghetto conditions in black neighborhoods that became flooded with waste and other pollutants (Rothstein 2017, 56). This

dynamic has recently been characterized as “environmental racism,” by which neighborhoods are “disproportionately exposed to toxic and hazardous waste based upon race” (Green Action 2021).

In addition to discriminatory zoning laws and real estate practices, job discrimination was another reason that black families’ housing choices were so limited. During this period, white employers almost completely denied black Chicagoans access to high-paying manufacturing jobs, leaving open only work as “domestic and personal servants.” Indeed, in 1910, only 8.5% of black men were employed in manufacturing, while over 80% of black women and almost 65% of black men worked as domestic and personal servants (Spear 1967, 55). These servant jobs were often low-paying and offered no real opportunity for career advancement. Further, most job unions within industries like manufacturing excluded black Americans. Therefore, black Chicagoans during their initial years in the city not only faced poverty due to their bleak job prospects but had no real options for escaping such poverty because they were locked out of quality manufacturing jobs (Spear 1967, 61-62). As a result, many black families simply did not have the means to move into white neighborhoods—another factor that exacerbated segregation.

Finally, a fourth factor that shaped the ghettoization of Chicago’s first-generation blacks was the ever-present threat and frequent commission of anti-black violence by whites. Indeed, as the growth of Chicago’s black population prompted blacks to search for new housing opportunities outside crowded black neighborhoods, white residents responded with force. For example, in Chicago’s all-white Woodlawn neighborhood, the arrival of a few black families caused white residents to “declare war” on blacks by attacking their homes and driving them

out with death threats (Rothstein 2017, 143). Additionally, from 1917 to 1921, 58 homes that had just been purchased by blacks in all-white neighborhoods were firebombed. This violence led to one of the biggest race riots in U.S. history during the summer of 1919, when 38 people – black and white – were killed (Rothstein 2017, 144). Most importantly, these violent incidents almost always went uninvestigated or prosecuted; police officials in cities like Chicago would simply stand by and shirk their obligation to protect black families. In this sense, the racial violence during this period was state-sanctioned (Rothstein 2017, 139-142).

These factors, taken together, formed the first Chicago black ghetto. Specific zoning ordinances and rules among real estate agents barred blacks from moving into white areas. When these rules and regulations failed, white residents resorted to violence that effectively drove many black families away. As a result, black Chicagoans were strictly limited to specific neighborhoods on the South Side, known as the "black belt," and small areas on the West Side. Critically, however, these forces did not simply cluster blacks together; they created the slum conditions that warrant the designation of "ghetto." Real estate agents and landlords took advantage of the limited range of housing options open to blacks by demanding inflated prices from black home-seekers. According to estimates, a black family paid $12.50 for housing that cost whites $8 (Spear 1967, 51). To pay these exorbitant costs, blacks often took in boarders, leading to crowding and driving black Chicagoans further into poverty. Moreover, surveys showed that many landlords refused to make repairs for black residents, causing widespread decay. As a result, black neighborhoods on the South and West Side became defined by poverty and abysmal living conditions. Therefore, these factors, along with an inability to

secure decent jobs, clustered blacks into confined areas, creating slum conditions. Simply put, white hostility created the first Chicago ghetto.

Time Period #2, 1920s – 1970s: The Federal Government and Local Forces

In the second time period, many critical events shaped not only Chicago, but also the country as a whole. Indeed, this pivotal period included the Great Depression, World War II, the Civil Rights Movement, and, ultimately, white backlash against the gains made by blacks during that movement. Like the period 1890 – 1920, the 1940s through the 1970s saw many of the same players – local government, real estate agents, and white residents – perpetrate segregationist policies and housing discrimination. Critically, however, the second period departs from the first in that numerous new tactics emerged as Chicago's demographic distribution shifted. Moreover, new players, including the federal government, started to play a larger role in discrimination. As a result, the city and its black population became even more segregated and isolated. In sum, adverse conditions in the first black ghetto increased in both number and intensity.

In 1920, no Chicago neighborhood was more than 90% black. By 1930, however, the U.S. census showed that 19% of black Chicagoans lived in neighborhoods that were 97.5% black and two-thirds lived in neighborhoods that were at least 90% black. This trend continued: By the late 1950s and early 1960s, 53% of Chicago blacks lived in neighborhoods that were essentially all-black (Hirsch 1998, 4). This change occurred even as Chicago's black population dramatically increased between 1945 and 1960. The increase reflects the results of the second Great Migration, when millions of black Americas migrated from the South to Northern cities such as Chicago, where, by the 1960s, blacks comprised 30% of the population (Hirsch 1998, 3).

To fully understand what caused this second stage of racial segregation, we must look to several federal and local housing policies that played key roles. The federal government initiated several housing programs in the 1930s that effectively segregated Chicago and other cities across the country. In response to a growing housing shortage, the federal government launched an "own your own home" initiative, building suburbs with single family homes in cities nationwide (Rothstein 2017, 60). Further, during the Great Depression, President Franklin Delano Roosevelt authorized the formation of the Home Owner's Loan Corporation (HOLC). The HOLC aimed to protect citizens from foreclosure on their homes by purchasing their mortgages and issuing new ones to be repaid over 15 years. Later, to address the postwar housing crisis, he created the Federal Housing Administration (FHA) to facilitate home-buying for middle-class families. The FHA did so by insuring "bank mortgages that covered 80% of purchase prices" with "terms of 20 years." Families who otherwise could not afford the full price of a house could now do so with help from the government (Rothstein 2017, 63-64). With these programs providing amortized mortgages – loans that could be played off in increments over time – less wealthy Americans who could afford modest down payments could not only purchase a home for the first time, but also build the equity that is an additional reward of home ownership (Rothstein 2017, 63-64).

These loans, however, were not open to everyone. Black Americans across the country were completely shut out of the subsidized HOLC and FHA loan programs. The HOLC excluded blacks through a practice called redlining. To qualify for a loan, an applicant had to pass a HOLC risk-assessment that was based on a review of the composition and condition of the neighborhood and surrounding areas. To help in their assessments, the HOLC created color-

coded maps of urban areas, using green to demarcate low-risk sectors and red for high-risk. The problem with this policy was that the HOLC considered any area with black residents, regardless of its socio-economic make-up, as high-risk. Therefore, the agency's loan-risk maps were guided significantly by race: Not every white neighborhood earned a green designation, but virtually every black neighborhood earned a red one. As a result, black Americans were denied access to mortgages whose terms were highly favorable. An additional negative effect of redlining was that because black neighborhoods were "redlined," many businesses looked elsewhere to plant roots because they considered an investment in black areas too risky (Rothstein 2017, 64-65).

Like the HOLC, the FHA conducted risk-assessments before providing home mortgages. The FHA's review policy included a "whites-only" requirement that automatically categorized a loan as prohibitively risky if the property in question was in a black neighborhood (Rothstein 2017, 64-65). For the FHA, the value of a property was directly tied to the surrounding neighborhood's racial composition: The mere presence of black neighbors torpedoed a home's value. It has been widely documented, however, that plenty of black Americans could afford these loans and were in fact at low risk of default. This meant that blacks were being denied not because of their financial status, but because of their race (Rothstein 2017, 69). Simply put, the official policy of the federal government's housing loan programs was racial segregation. Therefore, while lower-class whites moved to the suburbs and bought houses on highly favorable terms, blacks – including well qualified ones – across the country were locked out of this opportunity. As I will discuss in more detail later, this had tremendous financial

implications: as home values increased, whites were able to accumulate intergenerational wealth, while blacks were left out in the cold.

Critically, the policies of both these government agencies further worsened segregation in major cities like Chicago. Indeed, due to the agencies' refusal to give out loans in black areas, the HOLC's redlining policy steered white home buyers away from black neighborhoods, deepening segregation. Further, the FHA's whites-only policy and mass-production of suburban housing fueled a large-scale white exodus from urban centers. In the decade following WWII, over "700,000 new houses in the Chicago metro area" were constructed and, with the FHA favoring loans in the suburbs, whites fled to these opportunities (Moore 2016, 51). Indeed, by 1960, white Chicagoans living in the suburbs increased by 1,440,606, while blacks living in the suburbs only increased by 52,000 (Hirsch 1998, 49). As a result, Chicago during this period became a city defined by all-white suburbs and an inner-city primarily comprised of black Americans. This shift caused the old racial lines of the first Chicago ghetto to crumble, as whites moving to the suburbs left many properties in formerly all-white neighborhoods suddenly available to blacks. Black residents, desperate for housing as a result of segregationist tools like redlining, zoning, intimidation, and violence, quickly moved in (Hirsch 1998, 47). Most importantly, this so-called White Flight to the suburbs led to further decay within black neighborhoods, as more financially secure white Chicagoans abandoned neighborhoods, segregating blacks and, in turn, further concentrating poverty (Moore 2016, 51). Thus, it is evident that federal policies during the Great Depression and postwar eras segregated and economically disadvantaged black Americans in Chicago.

Before considering the local housing policies that played an important role in Chicago, we must first return to a key player discussed in Chicago's first historic period: real estate agents. With increased housing options for whites and the Supreme Court's striking down of racial covenants – agreements explicitly stating that a home could not be sold to a black person – in 1948, black Chicagoans began to move into previously all-white areas. Black residents were desperate for quality housing, as segregation and the surge in Chicago's black population had significantly increased demand. As a result, blacks were willing to pay much higher prices for a house or apartment than their white counterparts – a development real estate agents were all too eager to take advantage of. Due to the FHA's policy of not giving blacks loans and redlining any area with blacks in it, black residents in Chicago could not take out a home loan through a bank. The only option open to them was to buy a property "on contract" through real estate agents who were "contract sellers." When properties were sold on contract, the sellers had all the power and could charge the buyer as much as they wanted. Moreover, under a contract, if the buyer falls behind on payments, the contract seller can evict them (Satter 2009, 4-5).

Contract selling schemes were widely used on desperate black residents during this period. Indeed, in 1944 and 1960, studies showed black Chicagoans paid anywhere from 15% to 50% higher for housing than whites of similar economic status for comparable housing (Hirsch 1998, pg. 49-50). According to a lawyer who represented many black Chicago residents in the 1950s and 1960s, contract selling was widespread and specifically targeted blacks. He calculated that "85% of the properties purchased by blacks were sold on contract," and that, through these contracts, Chicago's black population was robbed of "1 million dollars a day" (Satter 2009, 4). For example, one of his clients, the Bolton family, bought a tiny, rundown

house for $13,900 on Chicago's South Side that their real estate agent had bought for $4,300. Further, the Bolton's were forced to sign a document stating that they had to provide monthly payments with interest to their agent even after buying the home. After investigating further, the Bolton's lawyer found that the same real estate agent had sold over 20 properties to blacks on contract in 1956. Additionally, another real estate agent in the area had sold 69 properties in 1956 and 59 in 1957, all under contract to black families. Critically, to keep up with the inflated house prices, black Chicagoans had to take in multiple boarders, work several jobs, and defer investments in basic upkeep. As a result, black homes and neighborhoods fell into decay and poverty. Worst of all, while blacks were being essentially robbed by real estate agents, whites were buying homes through FHA loans for almost nothing (Satter 2009, 4-6). Contract selling was a widespread scam that stripped blacks of their savings and, critically, pushed black neighborhoods further into poverty.

Additionally, contract selling not only drained black Chicagoans economically, but also segregated them from their white counterparts. This occurred because, in addition to preying on black residents, real estate agents preyed on white fears. Many white Chicagoans feared that their housing values would drop if blacks moved into their neighborhood. This belief was reinforced by the FHA policy that tied real estate values to a neighborhood's racial composition. Capitalizing on this, real estate agents "block busted" all-white neighborhoods by, for example, hiring black people to call white residents homes or walk a baby carriage through towns. Using these scare tactics, real estate agents would convince white Chicagoans that their neighborhoods were being overrun by blacks, and that they should sell before their property values dropped. As a result, in a rush to get out, whites would sell their homes for a discounted

price, and real estate agents would then sell these properties for an inflated price to blacks at a tremendous profit. White flight occurred yet again. (Hirsch 1998, 53-54). Quantitative review reveals that White Flight had a devastating impact on segregation. As whites sought housing elsewhere, "15% of dwellings changed from white to black for every 100 units built in the suburbs" between 1950 and 1960. Further, between 1950 and 1956, roughly 270,000 whites fled the city center for the suburbs. As a result, the segregated Black Belt of Chicago's South Side and West Side only grew and became blacker (Hirsch 1998, 49).

As this trend became more pronounced, white racism increased. As stated previously, in an attempt to pay their inflated property prices, black residents took in multiple roommates and ignored basic upkeep, leading to overcrowding and slum-like conditions. For whites, this re-enforced the "image they feared" that "communities deteriorate when blacks move in." This further fueled White Flight from a neighborhood when blacks moved in (Hirsch 1998, 56). In reality, as we have seen, predatory real estate agents and discriminatory practices were to blame for the slum-like conditions. Preying on white fear, real estate agents racially segregated Chicago even further during the 1940s and 1950s by triggering White Flight.

Lastly, to fully understand how a second ghetto formed in Chicago during this time period, we must look to local housing policies. With a large portion of the city's white population fleeing to the suburbs, downtown Chicago in the late 1940s and early 1950s struggled economically. Many of the white residents who moved to the suburbs were middle class, and the city's downtown businesses and institutions counted on this segment of the population in order to stay afloat. Many of the downtown businesses lost money and areas in and around the city center became increasingly run down. To turn things around, the

Metropolitan Housing and Planning Council was formed with various powerful Chicago businesses among its leadership. An aggressive redevelopment plan was drafted to fund numerous new housing projects and buildings throughout downtown and its surrounding areas. Ultimately, the state legislature and then-Mayor Kennelly constructed a redevelopment scheme guided by the council's plan (Hirsch 1998, 122-123).

Unfortunately, the proposal provided that no projects could occur until the Chicagoans currently living in these struggling areas, many of them black, were relocated. To accomplish this, the city resorted to "slum clearance," by which a Land Clearance Commission was created to "purchase, condemn, clear, and resell slum properties to private developers" (Hirsch 1998, 131). Since the land was sold to private developers, most of the new developments were whites-only, as there did not exist at the time a "nondiscriminatory tenant selection policy" that private entities were subject to. This, however, was intentional, as city and business officials feared "race mixing" and believed that investments and development projects would fail if they were open to blacks (Hirsch 1998, 131-132). For example, in 1948, one of the city's redevelopment projects partnered with the New York Life Insurance Company to transform the South Side areas closest to the city center. According to studies, the Land Commission cleared roughly 25,900 families, the majority of them black, from the South Side neighborhoods they were developing (Hirsch 1998, 141). Due to the high number of black Chicagoans being cleared, many black residents deemed the city's actions "negro clearance" instead of "slum clearance" (Hirsch 1998, 149).

Most importantly, due to factors outlined above, black Chicagoans' housing options at this time were extremely limited. The city's redevelopment plan paid very little attention to

this reality and made almost no effort to resettle the black residents they had cleared. As a result, dislocated black families had to crowd into what little housing was available in black areas or double up with other black families. As we saw previously, this doubling up was due to predatory real estate agents who charged black buyers exorbitantly high prices for property under a restrictive contract. This worsened already existing slums on the South Side and West Side and created new ones in previously all-white areas (Hirsch 1998, 142). Therefore, under the guise of redevelopment, the city of Chicago racially segregated its neighborhoods, expanding and worsening the ghetto conditions that had preexisted on the South and West Sides.

The city did, however, make something of an effort to resettle cleared residents through public housing constructed by the Chicago Housing Authority (CHA). As we have seen, the clearing of black families from their neighborhoods in the name of development caused a housing crisis. Worst of all, there was already a growing housing shortage for black Chicagoans in the post WWII era due to the massive population increase of blacks and the many factors that restricted their movement into white neighborhoods (Hirsch 1998, 155). In the 1940s, the CHA recognized how segregated the city had become and sought to use public housing as a way to break this trend. Indeed, in an attempt to promote integration, the CHA tried to distribute public housing throughout the city and implement a quota system. This quota system would require any public housing structure placed in a white neighborhood to have a certain percentage of blacks (Hirsch 1998, 239-240).

The authority's latest effort, however, was quickly thwarted by harsh public backlash to the CHA's integration policies. In an attempt to "save their neighborhoods," thousands of

white residents responded with widespread protest and violence, much as they had in the earlier period. When a black family or resident moved in, whites would attack their home and threaten them with mob violence (Hirsh 1998, 234). Fearing political backlash, the Illinois State Legislature voted to put the CHA under the control of the Chicago City Council (Hirsch 1998, 244). With this move, the council became authorized to dictate – including to veto – the CHA's site selections for public housing. Moreover, the council removed the head of the CHA who had implemented the racial integration policies. Their options narrowed by the many segregationist aldermen on the council, the CHA began placing public housing primarily in black neighborhoods. Meanwhile, the few public housing units placed in white neighborhoods were designated as "whites only" (Hirsch 1998, 250-251). Therefore, the CHA went from a government agency that "tinkered with the status quo" to "one that served as a bulwark of segregation" (Hirsch 1998, 234-235).

Scrutiny of the site-selection process reveals that public housing during the 1950s and 1960s segregated the city and created the overcrowded black ghetto on the South and West Sides. For example, in 1955, eleven public housing sites were up for approval by the City Council. Initially, many of the sites were rejected, as they were located in or near white neighborhoods. In the end, all eleven projects were placed in South Side black areas. Further, between 1950 and the mid-1960s, 35 public housing projects were approved, all but six in areas that were 85% to 95% black. Each of the six not placed in black areas only accepted whites (Hirsch 1998, 262-263). Many of the development projects in black areas were poorly funded, creating even worse slum conditions in black neighborhoods. As a result, public housing packed black Chicagoans into a "walled city" on the South and West Sides, creating "racially, socially,

economically, and politically segregated housing" (Hirsch 1998, 262). Additionally, with black residents already under the weight of residual, intergenerational poverty of the period 1890 – 1920, the new generation of public housing only further concentrated despair in black neighborhoods. Therefore, Chicago responded to the black housing crisis during the 1940s and 1950s by segregating blacks through public housing and creating an even larger, marginalized ghetto.

These factors, taken together, segregated Chicago's black population from 1940-1960, creating the "second ghetto." The FHA and HOLC's housing loan policy barred blacks from the suburbs and access to government-subsidized loans. These practices, along with real estate agents selling homes to blacks on contract, segregated and worsened impoverished conditions in black areas. Moreover, the redevelopment and public housing plan launched by the city cleared black residents and packed them into already-black areas. The combined effect of all these measures was that by the late 1960s, the South Side was blacker and faced more inequality than ever. Additionally, the West Side turned from mostly white to mostly black and poor (Hirsch 1998, 274). Most importantly, the federal and local governments were the driving forces behind these developments. The FHA and HOLC's denying loans to blacks and redlining were official government policies. Further, contract selling was widely known but never prosecuted and, critically, only made possible by the government's refusal to give housing loans to blacks. Worst of all, the redevelopment and public housing schemes were both carried out and created by city agencies and politicians. Therefore, the discrimination observed here is not naturally occurring but completely intentional. Simply put, black Chicagoans were victims of *de*

jure segregation: segregation through government policies and action (Rothstein 2017, VIII). The negative social and economic effects on black Chicago continue to this day.

Time Period #3, 1990s – Present: Real Estate Agents, Public Housing, "Reverse Redlining"

Although not as severe as in earlier decades, housing discrimination in Chicago continued on certain fronts from the 1990s to present day. First, public housing yet again played an important role. In the late 1990s, the mayor's office decided to tear down the public housing high-rises that had been built in the 1940s and 1950s. By this point, it had become clear that Chicago's public housing was a failure, as the poverty rates and poor conditions within many of the high-rise units ran rampant. Indeed, by the late 1990s, CHA public housing comprised 11 of the 15 poorest neighborhoods in the nation, and all of them were overwhelmingly black (Moore 2016, 64-66). In response, the federal government provided a $50 billion grant under the Housing Opportunities for People Everywhere program to redevelop public housing sites. The CHA's plan was to use the money to promote integration and deconcentrate poverty, mixing low-income and black residents throughout the city. The plan failed when only 1,468 of 16,000 families, most of them black, left destroyed public housing for mixed areas (Moore 2016, 67-69).

The problem was that when the CHA destroyed a public housing unit, it provided dislocated residents with a housing voucher to relocate. This voucher provided its recipients financial support in finding housing through the private market. Voucher recipients, however, struggled to find housing options on the private market in any but the lowest income areas. Moreover, the vouchers did not provide enough support to access housing in high-income areas. As a result, the richest and whitest neighborhoods have essentially no voucher holders,

while many of the black South Side neighborhoods have each gained over 1,000 voucher holders. Most importantly, between 2000 and 2010, almost every neighborhood that has received a large number of vouchers has declined in terms of median household incomes and housing sales (Moore 2016, 74-76). Further, between 1999 and 2008, voucher holders had a higher need for public assistance and lower employment rates after being relocated (Moore 2016, 73). In effect, the city's public housing program racially segregated its neighborhoods and concentrated poverty and slum-like conditions in black areas even more. Although this time around, racial segregation was not the government's intention, this was clearly the outcome of the 1990s redevelopment program.

A second sense in which housing discrimination continued was the behavior of predatory lenders. Lenders handed out subprime housing mortgages in mass to individuals who could not afford to pay them back. The borrowers later defaulted, losing all the money they had invested. This practice became known as "reverse redlining" because lenders specifically targeted communities that, years priors, had been redlined as "high risk" for loans (Rothstein 2017, 111).

Revealingly, lenders specifically targeted communities based on race rather than economic status. Low-income black Americans "were more than twice as likely as lower-income whites to have subprime loans," and middle to upper class black Americans "were about three times as likely as higher-income whites to have subprime loans." Moreover, in Chicago, black areas "were four times as likely to have subprime loans" as those who took out a loan in white areas (Rothstein 2017, 111). In particular, court documents revealed Wells Fargo instructed its lenders to specifically target black neighborhoods, as blacks "weren't savvy

enough to know they were being exploited." In a matter of months, according to Secretary of Housing and Urban Development Shaun Donovan in 2010, this predatory lending that targeted black communities and caused so many to default reversed "nearly two decades of gains" in black American wealth (Rothstein 2017, 112). Worst of all, the Federal Reserve's own internal statistics revealed the discriminatory intent behind these predatory loans, yet the federal government took no action (Rothstein 2017, 111-112). Therefore, discriminatory housing loan practices in Chicago, with the government tacitly complicit, yet again played a factor in worsening already extremely high poverty and low homeownership rates for black Chicagoans.

Lastly, in 2019, a study by the Chicago Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights found that real estate agents and landlords continued to obstruct black residents' access to housing. The study sent testers of different races to seek apartment rentals with and without a public housing voucher. Going to six different Chicago neighborhoods, they found that "white testers generally received better service from leasing agents than their black counterparts." Further, many of the black testers with housing vouchers were told that the apartments they were looking at did not accept vouchers. Some black testers received "terms and conditions" for apartments that differed from the ones read to white testers. Other black testers were simply turned away. Most importantly, the study found that black testers faced the worst levels of discrimination in the mostly white Near North Side neighborhood. The reported concluded that, despite the test's small size, the results show that black Chicagoans still struggle in the housing market, where the history of race-based housing discrimination endures (Moore 2019). Segregation continues because even in present-day Chicago, blacks faces barriers to choosing where they live.

How this History Created Black Poverty and Inequality Today

In summary, we have seen that, from 1890 to the present day, Chicago's black population has experienced repeated segregation and systemic discrimination in housing. Worst of all, this discrimination was frequently perpetrated by the government at the local, state, and federal levels. Indeed, policies such as redlining, the redevelopment project, and public housing site-selection were all carried out or drafted by government or governmental agencies. The result? Enduring segregation and marginalization of black Chicagoans. Indeed, returning to the beginning of this chapter, we are reminded that black segregation and high poverty rates remain extremely high in Chicago. Thus, despite some periodic improvements, inequalities have characterized the experience of black Chicagoans from the moment they first entered the city to today. The conclusion is inescapable that nothing meaningful has been done to repair past ills.

How then did this history of housing discrimination and segregation create the conditions of concentrated inequalities that we see in black neighborhoods today? When considering this past, many people dismiss the racist policies outlined above as exactly that--the past. Yet past policies "shape the racial landscape of today," and nothing has shaped the current unequal reality for black Chicagoans more than past housing discrimination (Rothstein 2017, 182). This is because in the U.S., wealth, class, and income mobility are all extremely low when the status one is born into is "sticky." In *Stuck in Place,* the sociologist Patrick Sharkey explores this idea by looking at data on race and neighborhoods from various U.S. cities. Sharkey found that "neighborhood inequality is multigenerational" in nature. Defining a poor

neighborhood as one with 20% of residents below the poverty line, Rothstein, in his book *Color of Law,* affirms Sharkey's findings. He writes,

> [Sharkey] finds that 67% of African American families hailing from the poorest quarter of neighborhoods a generation ago continue to live in such neighborhoods today. But only 40% of white families who lived in the poorest neighborhoods a generation ago still do so. Forty-eight percent of African American families, at all income levels, have lived in poor neighborhoods over at least two generations, compared to 7% of white families. (Rothstein 2017, 187)

For all Americans, moving up in class status is difficult. For black Americans, however, doing so is significantly more difficult than for whites. Sharkey explains this disparity illustrating that 67% of black families who are poor stay poor over multiple generations. White families, in contrast, escape poverty and face poverty less often than black families.

Sharkey's account illuminates why Chicago's history of housing discrimination has so perniciously influenced the city's current reality. The denial of high-paying manufacturing jobs to black Chicagoans in the early 1900s created extreme poverty among the black community that has very real residual effects today. Sharkey's demonstration of the stickiness of economic status suggests that the high black poverty rates in the 1900s were transmitted intergenerationally, shaping today's racial wealth gap. Moreover, the selling of houses on contract, a practice of the 1950s that, we have seen, led to blacks to losing their savings, crowding into decaying housing, and entering into poverty, is another causal factor of Chicago's current high rate of black poverty. The grandparents and great-grandparents of today's adult black Chicagoans were essentially kneecapped financially, creating a rippling effect that reverberates today by compromising the present generation's life chances. Even contemporary black Chicagoans who have not themselves faced housing discrimination personally and directly carry the effects of the discrimination that was perpetrated on their forebears.

For the vast majority of Americans, the family homes are the primary assets. If a current black adult's progenitors were locked out of equal housing opportunities, then that person is subject to an unfair game of catch-up today. During Chicago's second period of housing discrimination, we saw that the federal government-built thousands of single-family, whites-only homes in the suburbs. Further, the FHA denied black Americans access to government-subsidized amortized loans that allowed whites to buy homes for little down payment. This policy and others had lasting effects. In the suburbs of New York City, for example, a home in 1948 sold for roughly $75,000 today but now, on average, sells for $350,000. White families who had access to the suburbs and loans were able to buy homes when they were first built for almost nothing. This built great wealth for families over time, as housing bought at bargain prices in 1948 grew in value year after year. As a result, low-income and middle-class whites gained, according to estimates, $200,000 in wealth "over three generations." A similar trend occurred in Chicago and areas across the country. Thus, although they could easily afford it, lower- and middle-income black Americans were denied an opportunity to build wealth at a time when their white counterparts did exactly that (Rothstein 2017, 182-183).

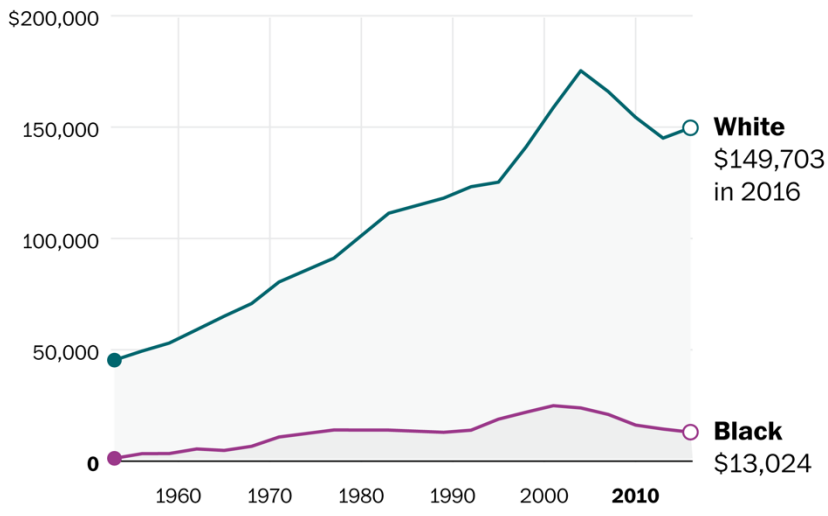
The wealth generated by whites through housing allows them to pass it on to future generations. In 1989, "24% of white households inherited wealth," while only "6% of black households inherited wealth; the average inheritance for blacks was only $42,000, versus $145,000 for whites (Rothstein 2017, 186). The damaging effect of imbalances such as these is a massive black-white wealth gap in which median household wealth differs by $123,000 (Rothstein 2017, 184). **Figure #3** shows this: In 2016, median white household wealth was $149,703, while median black household wealth was a mere $13,024 (Long and Van Dam 2020).

It seems impossible to look at the devastation and poverty in Chicago's black community today and not see the role played by past housing discrimination.

Figure #3

White wealth surges; black wealth stagnates

Median household wealth, adjusted for inflation



Source: Historical Survey of Consumer Finances via Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis and University of Bonn economists Moritz Kuhn, Moritz Schularick and Ulrike I. Steins
THE WASHINGTON POST

Further, this history also played a role in creating systemically inept schools. A large part of public-school funding comes from property taxes. This creates great inequalities among public schools in terms of resources and funding. As we have seen, decades of housing discrimination in Chicago created black neighborhoods with low-value housing and therefore low taxes, which, in turn, lead to underfunded schools that lack key resources like top-quality teachers. A poor education system impacts employment rates by contributing "to differential levels of employment, occupational status and earnings" (Peterson and Krivo 2010, 22). Evidence of this unequal, racialized reality abounds in Chicago, where public schools are heavily segregated based on race; many schools in black areas are 99% black and struggle with a lack of

resources and low-test scores (Moore 2016, 125-126). In contrast, public schools in the all-white northern suburbs are overwhelmingly white and rich in school resources (Moore 2016, 131). In sum, Chicago's history of housing discrimination further contributed to the unequal conditions in Chicago's black neighborhoods today by impacting the quality of schooling.

In addition to housing discrimination, the segregation and ghettoization of black residents played a role in creating the racial inequalities we see today. Segregation and poverty rates correlate with race, concentrating struggling individuals or families together in specific neighborhoods. This is demonstrably true of black Chicagoans, who are heavily clustered in specific South and West Side neighborhoods. This, in turn, creates an environment where other social ills connected to poverty, like unemployment, concentrate as well. Moreover, with segregation and poverty rates so high, black residents of lower- *and* middle-class status will experience these slum-like conditions (Massey and Denton 1993, 135-136). Whites of both lower and middle classes, in contrast, do not experience the same levels of concentrated poverty in their neighborhoods, as they are more spread out (Massey and Denton 1993, 138). Thus, high black segregation and poverty rates act as a catastrophic combination in Chicago. Decades of housing discrimination contributed in part to high rates of black poverty; segregation delivered the knock-out blow, clustering black Chicagoans in specific areas which, in turn, concentrated these social ills.

Segregation has a particularly devastating effect on neighborhoods during economic downturns. For example, the impact of the Depression in the 1930s and the recession and stagflation of the second half of the 1970s was particularly acute in Chicago. Blacks saw income decrease and poverty increase. With segregation being so high in the city, the dramatic

decrease in black poverty during this economic downturn in the 1930s and 1970s was confined solely to black segregated areas. This combination of black segregation and black poverty not only concentrates the number of impoverished black residents further, but limits this "shock" to specific areas causing devastation (Massey and Denton 1993, 141-143). Downturns also have an outsized impact in places like Chicago by increasing pressures on already-precarious businesses. After an economic downturn, for example, the black West Side neighborhood of North Lawndale lost 75% of its businesses between 1960 and 1970 (Massey and Denton 1993, 150). Therefore, with Chicago still racially divided today, segregation has indeed contributed to the creation and concentration of inequalities in black areas.

How Has Our Perspective Changed?

The work of Sampson et al. sheds light on how to interpret the effects of historical housing discrimination on gun violence in Chicago today. Sampson et al. identified how concentrated inequalities and segregation are causal factors for high rates of violence in black areas. Through survey research and regression analyses, the authors found that the higher a neighborhood's collective efficacy – defined as the ability of a neighborhood to organize and act as a social control on crime – the lower its homicide rate. Additionally, they found that a neighborhood's proximity to a neighborhood with low collective efficacy increases its homicide rate (Sampson et al. 2001, 537-538). Further, in finding that concentrated disadvantages like poverty and unemployment are strongly correlated with high gun violence rates, their modeling indicated that "a one standard deviation increase" in concentrated disadvantage in a neighborhood triggers a "40% increase in the homicide rate" (Sampson et al. 2001, 534). The authors only found these correlations between low collective efficacy and concentrated

disadvantage with high violence rates in black neighborhoods (Sampson et al. 2001, 547). Thus, Sampson et al. establish that current concentrated inequalities, like poverty and unemployment, strongly correlate with high homicide rates.

Before outlining Chicago's history of housing discrimination, Sampson et al.'s study provided us with a positive structural explanation for understanding why gun violence concentrates so heavily in Chicago's black neighborhoods. Now, however, with a historical perspective added, the way in which we look at Sampson et al.'s study and gun violence in general has changed. First, a structural perspective *in conjunction with* a historical one has given us a more holistic picture of Chicago's gun violence. Sampson et al. show that structural deficiencies like high poverty and low collective efficacy within black neighborhoods are key correlative factors of why one neighborhood has a high rate of violence and another does not. What we were left wondering was *where* these inequalities came from and *why* they were so concentrated in black areas. As we have seen, the answer to these questions is discrimination. For decades, local forces like real estate agents and city policies such as the rules of public housing site-selection confined blacks to certain areas and gave them an unfair shake in home-purchasing. Federal forces like the FHA's whites-only loan policy further segregated and impoverished blacks. This, in turn, created a multigenerational cycle of poverty, leading to today's unequal conditions. We therefore now have a truly antiracist perspective. We see that one cannot completely understand why gun violence concentrates so heavily in black communities without including Chicago's past because, for the most part, this past created the unequal environment that has enabled violence to thrive.

This antiracist perspective now allows us to fully and forcefully dismiss the "black culture" argument. Indeed, returning to Bill O'Reilly's comments, we now see that there is not a "violent subculture in the African American Community." The only reason gun violence concentrates in black neighborhoods and not white ones is a discriminatory historical record that specifically targeted and disadvantaged black Chicagoans. White Chicagoans were simply not subjected to this inequity and, as I will argue later, indeed benefited from it. As a result, a historical perspective, along with Sampson et al.'s structural explanation dismantles and exposes the racist tenor of O'Reilly's remarks. The only "violent subculture" here is the culture of racism established by whites.

This antiracist perspective also helps to destigmatize the stereotype of blackness and criminality. From slavery to the war on drugs, a false narrative has depicted crime as rampant among and committed overwhelmingly by black Americans. Moreover, former President Trump has trafficked in this rhetoric, referring to Chicago's black communities as dangerous, bullet-infested zones. Gun violence in Chicago's black neighborhoods is undeniably a problem. However, the antiracist posture can see the real underlying reasons: Housing discrimination and segregation perpetrated by local and federal forces created the structural inequalities that, as Sampson et al. explain, correlate heavily with gun violence. This, I argue, reveals black Chicagoans as victims of a racist past that endures today. We cannot simply criminalize black Chicagoans, now that we understand the *why* and *how* behind the violence.

Lastly, turning to policy solutions, this antiracist and holistic picture of Chicago's gun violence has provided the perspective needed to make the necessary short-term programs more rational. As I argue in the next chapter, working with current shooters through violence

intervention and prevention programs is absolutely essential to stopping the violence. This requires working face-to-face with gun-violence perpetrators, providing them with services that address the direct and underlying reasons that led them to pick up a gun. It is easy to look at someone who has committed a violent crime and simply brand them as a dangerous criminal. Indeed, at the beginning of this chapter, we saw how one Chicago city councilman responded to CPD's violence-intervention efforts with horror, stating, "We're sitting down and negotiating with urban terrorists" (Papachristos and Kirk 2015, 525). I contend that if the same councilman read how decades of housing discrimination and segregation marginalized and impoverished Chicago's black population, then his opinion on anti-violence programs would change. He would see that the structural inequalities that correlate so closely with high rates of violence were created by racism and unequal treatment. This deeper understanding then humanizes black perpetrators of gun violence as more than just criminals, but as victims of a racist past. I do not, of course, excuse violence. In the next chapter, I explain that a big part of anti-violence programs is holding perpetrators accountable when they do in fact commit acts of violence. Here, I simply argue that we must look through a more humane lens at Chicago's violence if we want see black gun-violence perpetrators accurately as more than only criminals.

The serious, long-term policy changes needed to truly address the entrenched inequalities in black communities also seem justified now. Indeed, policies that desegregate and invest in Chicago's black communities are needed to address the high rates of poverty and isolation from the rest of the city. For example, in 2019, Illinois legalized marijuana for recreational use, directing 25% of the revenue generated to Chicago's black communities through a fund called "Restore, Reinvest, and Renew." This was an attempt to repair the

damage the war on drugs had on Chicago's black neighborhoods and address high rates of poverty (Mccoppin, 2021). Without a historical perspective, these types of investment programs would to many to be a handout. Now, however, anyone looking at Chicago's gun-violence problem in black neighborhoods will understand why the city has a moral obligation to repair the damage wrought by unequal conditions of the past that continue today. Simply put, reparations are in order. As I argue in the next chapter, any city or state official who understands the historical record and its impact on today environment must agree.

The political capital needed to enact reparations exists to the extent that white Chicagoans have benefited greatly from decades of anti-black discrimination. The foregoing discussions of government-assisted FHA housing loans during the postwar period and the earlier lockout of blacks from the best (and best-paying) union jobs are only two cases in point. Simply put, practices such as these were effectively affirmative action for whites, for which counterbalancing policies must be enacted for blacks.

Decades of housing discrimination and segregation have significantly contributed to the white privilege that predominates today. Black Chicagoans live in neighborhoods with low-quality schools, high poverty, little opportunity, and high crime. Whites mostly live-in neighborhoods with little crime, plenty of opportunity, and well-funded schools. Thus, a person's race often determines their quality of life in today's Chicago. Despite this, as we saw in **Figure #2,** nothing has been done yet to repair the racist past that created this divide. It is my hope that, after reading this chapter, any white Chicagoan, from lawmakers to everyday citizens, will shift from a stance of concern to one of action to spark the major policy changes

necessary to bridge Chicago's racial divide. It is time for the city of Chicago to finally reckon with this past and take serious and meaningful action to address a problem of its own creation.

Chapter 3

Legal Cynicism and Chicago's History of Police Abuse

At this point, this thesis has now developed a more complete picture of Chicago's gun violence problem. We saw how Chicago's past history of housing discrimination and *de jure* segregation, that is segregation through government policies and action, created the unequal racial divide in Chicago today. After putting this history in conversation with Sampson et al.'s study, it became clear that Chicago's discriminatory past created the inequalities in black neighborhoods that are fueling the violence. This historical perspective, combined with Sampson et al.'s structural analysis, provided a firm anti-racist viewpoint in which the stigma of blackness and criminality and the "black culture is to blame" narrative can now fully be challenged and dismissed. As a result, I argued that this shifts one's perspective of black gun violence perpetrators from simply a criminal to a victim of an unequal divide created by a racist past.

Chicago's history, however, of housing discrimination and segregation is not the only part of the city's past that plays a role when it comes to gun violence. Indeed, arguably the most important aspect is Chicago's history of police abuse against its black residents. Returning to the literature review, police play a factor in urban gun violence through a concept called legal cynicism which is the "deep-seated belief in the incompetence, illegitimacy, and unresponsiveness of the criminal justice system" (Abt 2019, 62-63). Adding to Chapter 2, this is yet another factor that, in taking a historical approach, explains why gun violence in Chicago is concentrated in and driven so heavily by its black communities. As we will see, decades of police abuse inflicted upon black Chicagoans has largely created deep cynicism leading to gun violence. In other words, the main point I am to make in this chapter is, although they are often thought of as the solution, police are in fact a part of the problem. This, I argue, further

shifts one's perspective of black gun violence perpetrators from simply a criminal to victims of past and current racial discrimination. As we will see in Chapter 4, the legal cynicism amongst Chicago's black neighborhoods created by this history of police abuse is absolutely essential in understanding what policy solution actually works when it comes to violence reduction.

Accordingly, this chapter will proceed in two distinct parts. First, I will outline two key studies that clearly identify and explain how legal cynicism is driving gun violence in Chicago's black neighborhoods. Second, I will outline the history of police discrimination against black Chicagoans. After doing this, part #2 will then discuss these studies in conjunction with this history of police abuse and ask in what ways has our perspective changed? Ultimately, I will seek to show that it was this abusive past that created a key driving factor of Chicago's violence: legal cynicism.

Part #1: Studies Linking Legal Cynicism to High Rates of Gun Violence

In their 2011 study, David Kirk and Andrew Papachristos – both of which are sociologists and expert researchers when it comes to violent crime – explore this relationship between legal cynicism and gun violence in Chicago. The authors provides an extremely clear explanation of how this dynamic plays out and why it leads to increased violence. The most common way legal cynicism can arise in a neighborhood is through the actions of police. If law enforcement treats a community with disrespect or uses excessive force legal cynicism will follow. Simply put, "the way justice is administered influences legal cynicism" (Kirk and Papachristos 2011, 1200). The consequences of this cynicism, according to the authors, is that it acts as a catalyst for violence in the streets as many see it as their only option. They write,

> "the consequence is constraint – that is, cynicism constrains choices for resolving grievances and protecting oneself because individuals are more likely to presume that

> the law is unavailable or unresponsive to their needs. In the face of such constraints, individuals may choose to engage in their own brand of social control because they cannot rely upon the law to assist them….to be clear, cynicism toward the law does not *directly* cause neighborhood violence yet it makes it more likely because mistrust of the agents of law opens up the *possibility* that individuals will resort to illegal violence to redress a problem instead of abiding by the letter of the law" (Kirk and Papachristos 2011, 1200-1203).

Thus, legal cynicism makes the probability of violence greatly increase in cynical communities as people do not believe police will protect them or solve a harm done upon them. Violence can then follow as it acts as a form of social control (Kirk and Papachristos 2011, 1204). For example, say you are in a gang and someone you know is shot. Due to previously negative experiences, you do not trust nor believe the police are capable of delivering justice. Therefore, you take justice into your own hands responding with a retaliatory shooting or killing (Kirk and Papachristos 2011, 1203). This is the deadly consequence of legal cynicism. Courtroom justice turns to street justice as many see it as their only choice (Abt 2019, 73). As we saw in Abt's key factors of urban gun violence, retaliatory shootings, usually involving gangs, is an all-too-common scene that plays out on Chicago's streets.

Looking at Chicago, Kirk and Papachristos find strong evidence for this dynamic. Using data from a community survey and the U.S. census, the authors ask, "does legal cynicism explain why some neighborhoods have drastically more homicides than others?" (Kirk and Papachristos 2011, 1206). After running modeled regression analyses, Kirk and Papachristos (2011) found that there is a "positive significant association between legal cynicism and homicide" (1221) . As a result, they conclude that this finding supports the link between legal cynicism and homicide. They write, "Neighborhoods where the law and the police are seen as illegitimate and unresponsive have significantly higher homicide rates then in neighborhoods

where the law is viewed more favorable (Kirk and Papachristos 2011, 1221). Most importantly, the authors found that black Chicagoans viewed the law cynically at significantly higher rates than white Chicagoans (Kirk and Papachristos 2011, 1217). Thus, in Chicago's black neighborhoods, it is evident that a deep feeling of legal cynicism is playing a large role in driving the gun violence.

Additionally, legal cynicism is not just causing more gun violence through retaliatory killings. It is also causing increased violence in cynical neighborhoods by driving people to carry guns. In his 2016 study, Michael Sierra-Arevalo – who is also a sociologists as well as a criminologist and expert on gun violence – explores this relationship between legal cynicism and gun ownership in Chicago. Similar to Kirk and Papachristos, Sierra-Arevalo explains how certain communities develop legal cynicism where, for example, police often do not respond to calls or "do little to resolve crime and violence" (Sierra-Arevalo 2016, 2). As a result, people in these communities will carry or own firearms to "ensure the protection they feel police cannot or will not provide" (Sierra-Arevalo 2016, 2). To test this, Sierra-Arevalo takes data from a survey that looks at active offenders, many of which are gang members, in Chicago neighborhoods that have high rates of violence. Critically, close to 90% of those surveyed were black (Sierra-Arevalo 2016, 3).

Ultimately, 76% of survey respondents stated they had or do own a gun and, among these gun owners, over 80% stated their reason for having one was for protection. Most importantly, Sierra-Arevalo explored if the way people felt about police was causing them to have a gun for protection. Using regression modeling, he finds strong support for this theory. He writes, "Among respondents who report having ever possessed a firearm, those with more

negative perceptions of the police are significantly more likely to report having acquired their most recent firearm for protection" (Sierra-Arevalo 2016, 11). Thus, a big reason black Chicagoans in the city's most violent neighborhoods are carrying guns is for protection because they firmly believe those tasked with protecting them, the police, will not or cannot be trusted to do their job. Looking ahead to Chapter 4, Chicago mayor Rahm Emmanuel responded to high rates of gun violence in the past with tough on crime measures like harsh mandatory minimum sentences for illegal gun carrying (Wildeboer 2013). The problem, however, is if people are carrying guns to protect themselves, how likely will it be that harsher sentencing deters them from doing so? This will be an important question to keep in mind when violence intervention and prevention strategies versus tough on crime approaches are discussed in Chapter 4. Violence intervention and prevention strategies ability to address this feeling of legal cynicism is, as I will outline, why they are so effective.

Since active offenders are surveyed, this habit of carrying a gun due to legal cynicism reflects the small group of shooters driving Chicago's violence. As stated by Kirk and Papachristos, with legal cynicism present, individuals will resort to violence as a form of "social control" to protect themselves. This greatly increases the likely hood of violence. Indeed, with individuals carrying guns for protection, violence is almost certain to follow. Therefore, Sierra-Arevalo shows that this dynamic is clearly at play in Chicago's most violent neighborhoods.

Part #2: Chicago's History of Police Abuse - How Does this Change Our Perspective?

Where then did this legal cynicism that is contributing to the violence in Chicago's black neighborhoods come from? Kirk, Papachristos, and Sierra-Arevalo clearly articulate how legal cynicism is created by police poorly carrying out the law and treating those they are tasked with

protecting negatively. What is not talked about all, however, is the history of police abuse black Chicago neighborhoods were and continue to be subjected to that created this cynicism. The first visible and major case of brutality against Chicago's black community was the killing of Black Panther leader Fred Hampton. Hampton, who was one of many leaders of the Black Panther Party, was shot dead in 1969 by Chicago police officers in his apartment. An investigation several years later found that a police informant had drugged Hampton prior to the police entering the apartment. Additionally, it found that Hampton and other Black Panther members in the apartment did not fire any shots where the police simply entered and began to shoot. Worst of all, a witness stated they saw a police officer kill an already detained Hampton with a shot to the head. This led many, especially those in Chicago's black community, to see Hampton's killing by police as essentially an assassination (Bleakley 2019, 433).

Although Hampton's shooting is a single case, the reality is that the Chicago Police Department's (CPD) abuse against the city's black population went much deeper and was much more widespread. Nowhere is this more apparent than in the Jon Burge torture scandal. In 1969, Burge began his decorated carrier as a CPD detective and commander at Area 2, the almost completely black southside police district. At Area 2, he commanded an all-white violent crime unit of detectives. From 1972 to 1991, Burge and his unit tortured roughly 200 different suspects almost all of which were black men (Bleakley 2019, 439). In almost every case, Burge and other officers under him used an "electric shock device", which he called the "n***** box", on these black suspects. Blatant racism, especially from Burge himself, was a big motivating factor for the targeting and egregious treatment of black Chicagoans (Taylor 2014,

331). Shockingly, every single person tortured was later found to be innocent as they were forced into giving false confessions. For example, after two CPD officers were killed in 1982, Burge was put in charge of a massive manhunt to find those responsible. In his article, Flint Taylor outlines how the way in which Burge and his unit carried out this investigation is a perfect example of his torture and harassing policing methods against the black community. He writes,

> "Police kicked down doors and terrorized scores of African Americans in what…the Afro American Police League condemned as 'martial law' that 'smacked of Nazi Germany'. Suspected witnesses were smothered with bags and threatened with bolt cutters, and Burge and his detectives took several young men – whom they wrongly suspected to be the killers – to police headquarters, where they tortured them" (Taylor 2014, 332).

These young men Burge brought in for questioning were Andrew and Jackie Wilson. Both brothers were brutally tortured and repeatedly beaten, burned, and shocked "on the nose, ears, lips, and genitals with Burge's Box" (Taylor 2014, 332). Ultimately, both brothers were forced to confess for a crime they did not commit, and Andrew Wilson was sentenced to death (Taylor 2014, 333).

Most importantly, CPD Police Superintendent Brzecezek and State's Attorney Daley were both informed of Area 2's torture of the Wilson brothers but refused to do anything. Instead, they both praised Burge's investigation and State's Attorney Daley prosecuted the Wilson brothers despite knowing about their coerced confessions (Taylor 2014, 333). Indeed, on appeal to overturn his conviction due to torture, Andrew Wilson's lawyers and the court found that Police Superintendent Brzeczek had received countless complaints from black neighborhoods that Burge and his unit were torturing black suspects but did nothing (Taylor 2014, 337). Moreover, an internal investigation report in 1990 recommended Burge and other

detectives in his unit be fired for torturing Andrew Wilson and found the torture of suspects to be widespread. The report wrote, "Suspects held in custody at Area 2 had been subjected to systematic and methodical abuse…the abuse included planned torture, and the Area 2 command personal were aware of the systematic and encouraged it by actively participating" (Taylor 2014, 339). The commander of Area 2 at the time attempted to bury the report but it was eventually released to the public in 1992 receiving national coverage (Taylor 2014, 339).

In 2000, the Illinois Governor George Ryan pardoned four black men who were on death row. He did so because clear evidence was uncovered that their confessions were false and given while being subjected to torture by Burge. Moreover, due to so many other Chicagoans coming forward with torture allegations against Burge and other Area 2 officers, Governor Ryan "commuted all 163 Illinois death sentences to life without parole" (Taylor 2014, 352). Further, in 2008, 9 more black men were deemed innocent and released from prison on the basis that their confessions were coerced through torture by detectives related to Burge (Taylor 2014, 365). In the end, after public hearings in 2007 where numerous torture survivors testified to their experiences, Burge was finally brought to justice in 2011 on charges of perjury and obstruction of justice (Taylor 2014, 363).

Critically, however, Burge's and Area 2's abusive treatment of black Chicagoans was not the only police discrimination that was occurring during this 1980s and early 1990s time period. Indeed, the CPD unit known as the "skullcap crew", which was tasked with patrolling crime in the public housing south division, similarly terrorized black residents. In his article, Paul Bleakley outlines how the Chicago Police Department has a long tradition of using excessive force on black citizens and the skullcap crew reflects this. According to Bleakley, the crew had

much success in solving cases and their careers, but this resulted largely from their abusive tactics. He writes,

> "The skullcap crew's success in street-level investigations largely arose from the fear they instilled in the community, and the widespread knowledge that the team of 5 officers would use any means to secure arrests and convictions. Actions of the crew can only be described as harassment…a 2001 incident in which the skullcap crew raided a basketball game…and subjected men, women and children alike to warrantless searches and excessively forceful treatment….In many other cases members of the group were accused of forcing black civilians to perform searches on each other and carrying out randomly-targeted assaults on African-American youths for the purposes of stilling fear" (Bleakley 2019, 442).

Thus, Bleakley shows how the skullcap crew repeatedly harassed black residents subjecting them to unlawful stops, force, and searches. Worst of all, these officers did this on purpose to instill fear amongst the black community they were patrolling in an attempt to maintain control.

Additionally, the crew's abusive treatment was specifically targeted at black Chicagoans as the misconduct allegations reported against them came heavily from black individuals. Indeed, 87% of complaints excessive use of force and 100% of complaints regarding false arrest or verbal abuse against the crew came from a black resident (Bleakley 2019, 442). This was further supported by numerous reports from black individuals that the skullcap crew had used racial slurs when interacting with them (Bleakley 2019, 442). Most importantly, although the crew had 128 officially filed complaints, almost none were ever followed up on and investigated by the CPD. In fact, the leader of the skullcap crew, who faced over 62 misconduct allegations, was never actually investigated or punished and instead received numerous awards (Bleakley 2019, 443). For Bleakley, this, along with the career success Burge achieved, shows that the CPD condoned and *awarded* the abusive tactics used. Indeed, in both cases the department

clearly knew about the excessive use of force being used but choose to do nothing. Thus, Bleakley concludes that "institutional support" for these tactics was present and because they were rewarded other CPD officers believed treating people, especially those in the black community, was okay (Bleakley 2014, 444).

Therefore, the Hampton shooting, Burge torture scandal, and the skullcap crew, taken together, show us that the CPD has a dark history of discriminating against the black community. These incidents almost certainty damaged the black community's view point of the police at the time and even today. Indeed, although it was an isolated incident, the Hampton shooting was widely published. This, combined with reports later showing police essentially assassinated Hampton, most likely caused black Chicagoans to look at the police with caution. Additionally, the repeated abuse Burge and the skullcap crew subjected black residents to likely completely shattered any trust the black community had in police. In both cases, officers specifically targeted black Chicagoans and criminalized them where they used racial slurs and excessive force. With this in mind, it is therefore no surprise that black Chicagoans did not trust police. Would you trust someone who verbally degraded and tortured multiple members of your community?

Most importantly, the fact that Burge's abusive treatment became public knowledge through court cases and the Governor pardoning multiple innocent black men likely created some level cynicism throughout the black community. Whether you were subjected to police abuse or not, simply seeing reports of Burge torturing over 200 black men, most of them innocent, caused black Chicagoans to lose trust in police. Moreover, with Burge's case dragging on until 2011, just the reports of his tortures treatment likely continued to create legal cynicism

in black neighborhoods despite it no longer taking place. Worst of all, Burge and the skullcap crew were never really held accountable by the CPD despite higher-ups knowing about their egregious behavior. Instead, they were rewarded with awards and a high rank. This lack of accountability certainty worsened legal cynicism as well. Lastly, this further shows us why tough on crime policies are not the answer. Indeed, both the skullcap crew and Burge criminalized and specifically targeted black residents. At least for the skullcap crew, part of their motive was that, since a lot of the crime was occurring in black neighborhoods, the way to stop this crime was search or stop every resident. Instilling fear and being tough on crime, they thought, would curb crime. In reality, as Kirk and Papachristos show, this simply breeds legal cynicism making violent crime worse. Therefore, we begin to see exactly where the high rates of legal cynicism amongst black Chicagoans identified by studies actually came from.

Turning to today, this abuse of Chicago's black community by the CPD has continued. This is perfectly reflected in the 2014 police shooting of the black Chicago teenager Laquan McDonald. Initially, after police shot and killed McDonald, the official report stated that McDonald had a knife and attacked responding officers slashing the tires of their vehicles. Later, however, the dash cam footage was publicly released showing that this is not what happened. According to the footage, McDonald was unarmed and walking in the middle of the road when Officer Van Dyke pulled up and immediately began firing. McDonald did not charge any officer or slash any tires. He was shot 18 times (Bleakley 2019, 437). After this footage was released, there was massive protests and outrage from Chicago's black community. Critically, eight other officers were on scene and not one took issue with Van Dyke's actions. This, along with the fact that the report essentially covered up the excessive use of force, leads Bleakley to

conclude that there is a culture and "pattern of excessive force towards black civilians" in the CPD (Bleakley 2019, 438).

Many look at the McDonald shooting and dismiss it as an isolated incident. The statistics, however, tell a different story. According to data collected by the Indivisible Institute in 2018, black Chicagoans between 2005 and 2015 made up 72% of those subjected to use of force despite only comprising 32% of the city's total population (Bleakley 2019, 427). Moreover, a Department of Justice (DOJ) Investigation in 2017 further reflected this reality. In response to the McDonald Shooting, the DOJ launched an official investigation into the conduct of the CPD. Ultimately, the DOJ had three key findings to highlight in their final report. First, investigators uncovered a pattern of officers using excessive and unlawful force. They write, "We…found that CPD officers engage in a pattern or practice of using force, including deadly force that is unreasonable" (DOJ 2017, 5). For example, like the McDonald shooting, DOJ investigators found other cases where CPD officers shot at people despite there being no threat to justify use of force (DOJ 2017, 6).

Secondly, it was found that the CPD has a complete lack of accountability. Like the Burge and skullcap crew example, the CPD only investigated 2% out of 30,000 misconduct complaints and there was almost no discipline or punishment (DOJ 2017, 7). Lastly, the DOJ uncovered that the unlawful use of force was used mostly on communities and residents of color on the city's South and West Sides. Indeed, according to their statistics, "CPD uses force almost *ten times* more often against blacks than against whites" (DOJ 2017, 14). Moreover, investigators found that CPD officers openly expressed racist views but were not held

accountable by the department. Due to this, the DOJ concluded that CPD's conduct has damaged their legitimacy and trust with Chicago's communities of color (DOJ 2017, 15).

Therefore, we see that even today the CPD continues to use enforce the law against Chicago's black residents in an unjust manner. Like police abuse of the past, this more recent mistreatment of black Chicagoans directly explains the high rates of legal cynicism found in Kirk, Papachristos, and Sierra-Arevalo's studies. The public nature of the unlawful shooting of McDonald combined with the numerous other individual incidents of police abuse experienced by black Chicagoans has without a doubt created deep legal cynicism. Similar to the Burge torture scandal, seeing or hearing about the discriminatory conduct by CPD officer's not only creates cynicism but validates the individual experience you may have had worsening legal cynicism further. What's more, the CPD's complete lack of accountability and unwillingness to investigate any misconduct complaints filed makes a bad situation even worse. Knowing about misconduct and refusing to discipline officers signals to effected communities that the department as a whole believes such unlawful conduct is okay. For any rational person, it would be almost impossible to trust an institution that turns a blind eye to the unjust behavior of those within it.

In conclusion, this history of police abuse shows us the why behind the legal cynicism in Chicago's black neighborhoods. Indeed, prior to outlining Chicago's history of police discrimination, we knew through Kirk, Papachristos, and Sierra-Arevalo's studies that legal cynicism is driving gun violence in black neighborhoods. We, however, did not know the police conduct that actually created this cynicism. Now, one sees that black Chicagoans have good reason to not trust the CPD. Years of police criminalizing black communities and excessively

using force, even torture, completely shattered any CPD legitimacy in black neighborhoods. This, I argue, makes anyone see the behavior of Chicago gun violence perpetrators as more rational. If, because of this history, black residents cannot trust police, then some turning to violence to achieve justice or protect oneself makes sense. I am not saying it excuses such conduct. I am simply saying, like Chapter 2, it makes policy makers begin to see black gun violence perpetrators as more than just criminals but victims of past and current discriminatory treatment. This will, in turn, provide the humanizing perspective needed to see violence intervention programs as a logical option. Most importantly, this deadly relationship between legal cynicism and violence, as well as the abusive police treatment behind it, shows policy makers that police reform must be a part of any serious anti-violence effort. As we will see in Chapter 4, directly addressing police misconduct and legal cynicism is why violence intervention programs are so effective.

Chapter 4

Public Policy Solutions: Moving Away From the Classic Tough on Crime Approaches

Chapter's 2 and 3, taken together, have effectively illustrated the origins of various key factors that are driving Chicago's gun violence in black neighborhoods today. A stronger and anti-racist perspective of the violence is now realized. With all of this in mind, what then actually works when it comes to fighting urban gun violence? How can we undo the massive inequalities and racial segregation? If structural racism created the conditions for gun violence to thrive in Chicago's black communities, then, as I will argue, this must be addressed through reparations. Contrary to what people think, however, reparations are not enough as we need short term solutions to stop the violence *right now.* As we will see, long term investments must be paired with violence intervention and prevention programs.

To answer these questions, I will explore what policy approaches are best in order to stop the violence and heal Chicago's hurting black communities. Specifically, I will seek to discredit the typical tough on crime approaches that have historically been the crime fighting solution for violent crime. As we will see, this aggressive strategy called for the flooding of high violence neighborhoods with police and a crackdown on any and all crime. The result, returning to the introductory chapter, was the mass incarceration of black Americans where, in 2010, the U.S. reached an incarceration rate of 750 per 100,000 citizens. A huge and disproportionate number of those incarcerated were and are black. (Alexander 2010, 7-8). This, as illustrated by Alexander, ripped apart black communities destroying lives as a conviction strips individuals of basic rights (Alexander 2010, 5). Therefore, I will argue and attempt to illustrate why this destructive crime fighting strategy is ineffective and illogical when it comes to combating gun violence in Chicago.

In what follows, this final chapter will proceed in five parts. First, I will outline several key principles of Chicago's gun violence articulated by Abt. These are essential in understanding why a tough on crime approach is not effective and anti-violence programs are. Second, past tough on crime strategies to gun violence will be discussed. Specifically, I will seek to show why such an aggressive approach is unjust and simply does not work when it comes to combating gun violence in cities. What we learned in Chapter 3 will play an important role here. In particular, the idea that, although they are often thought of as the solution, police are in fact a part of the problem when it comes to driving the violence.

Thirdly, I will outline why, in light of Abt's defining factors of urban gun violence, violence intervention and prevention strategies are the most effective approaches to stopping Chicago's gun violence right now. Several studies and other cities illustrating the success these programs have had in curbing gun violence will be outlined. Most importantly, I will show why, after gaining a strong anti-racist perspective in Chapter 2 and 3, these strategies now appear more rational for policy makers. Lastly, the long-term investment and policy action that must be taken in order to undo the entrenched inequalities in Chicago's black neighborhoods will be discussed. Here, I will argue that Chicago's history of housing discrimination, segregation, and police abuse and its impact on black communities calls for one thing: reparations. Similar to part 3, our new anti-racist perspective will be brought in where one will see these aggressive measures not as handouts but as a way to repair decades of racism.

Throughout the chapter, I will aim to situate my policy recommendation within the wider debate on what is the best solution to gun violence and crime more generally. Typically there are two sides to this debate: those on the far left and the tough on crime right. Over this

past summer, the U.S. witnessed an awakening to the many racial injustices that black Americans face. Specifically, after the killing of George Floyd at the hands of police, people reacted with outrage to this repeated pattern of police killing unarmed black men. As a result, many on the left began to call for the abolishment of the police or to "defund the police" (Herrera 2020). Those on the right, however, still saw tough on crime as the answer. Conservative figures and politicians like President Trump stated abolishing or defunding the police would mean anarchy and rampant crime. Chicago in particular is often brought up where politicians on the right state defunding the police would negatively impact black communities suffering from gun violence in the city (Herrera 2020).

Calls to abolish the police encapsulate the second side of the public debate on what to do about crime: prison abolitionists. In general, abolitionists believe that the entire criminal justice system should be axed. Prisons and jails must be done away with as they are an inhumane form of torture that do not actually address the problems, such as social ills, that lead someone to be incarcerated (Kelly 2019). People should be guided away from situations that would land them in prison or in contact with police. An example of this is "decriminalizing drug use" (Kelly 2019). Simply put, in their view, it is illogical to criminalize people for crimes that stem from issues that often derive from inequalities. The better and more human alternative to reducing violence and crime is to focus on restoring offenders and investing in communities not harsh punishment through incarceration. Moreover, abolitionists believe the police should be abolished where resources are then redistributed "back into housing, health, and economic opportunities for underserved communities" suffering from extreme inequalities (Kelly 2019).

In Chicago, the Black Youth Project 100 (BYP100) is an organization that reflects these abolitionist views. BYP100 believes the CPD should be abolished where they specifically called for the Chicago City Council to stop its plan to build a $95 million police academy. Instead, BYP100 believes this funding should go towards "investing in education, employment, and resources" for communities. Further, the organization published a specific policy memo "the Agenda to Build Black Futures" specifically calling for reparations to compensate for the harm inflicted on Chicago's black communities by past discrimination (BYP100 2021). As we will see, I am situated directly in between these two conflicting sides. In calling for violence intervention and prevention programs, I agree, in part, with the tough on crime right. I agree in that the police and prosecution must continue to be a part of the solution. In calling for reparations and a more humane approach to curbing crime, I agree with BYP100 and prison abolitionists. These are the type of points I will make throughout to situate my public policy solutions in today's debate on how the U.S. should tackle crime.

Before jumping into part 1, it is important to define a common term that will be used throughout this chapter: urban gun violence. In his book, Abt defines urban gun violence as shootings or homicides that occurred within American cities on the streets (Abt 2019, 4). As we will see, the public nature of gun violence in Chicago and other cities is a defining factor. Most importantly, urban gun violence is a completely separate phenomenon from other types of gun violence like mass shootings. Indeed, according to Abt, mass shootings and urban gun violence are the same in that they are both committed by men with guns. Mass shootings, however, are rare and typically committed against strangers with guns that are legally purchased. In contrast, urban gun violence is more predictable and common where it is committed with

illegally purchased or borrowed guns (Abt 2019, 135). Therefore, we must not put all gun violence under the same umbrella. The solutions required to stop mass shootings are completely different from the solutions required to stop urban gun violence. This is essential in understanding why violence intervention and prevention programs are so effective and needed in Chicago.

Part #1: Several Key Principles of Urban Gun Violence

With Abt's definition of urban gun violence in mind, I will now lay out a few important facts that are crucial to not only understand what is truly driving Chicago's gun violence but understand what crime fighting strategy works and does not work. First, returning to the literature review, Thomas Abt, in his book *Bleeding Out*, provides an absolutely essential concept to urban gun violence: that it is sticky. As we have already seen, gun violence and specific inequalities like poverty are sticky in that they heavily concentrate in specific black neighborhoods. Interestingly, according to Abt, gun violence concentrates even more in the communities most effected where only a small number of individuals are actually doing the shooting (Abt 2019, 33). This is why, for Abt, simply focusing on root causes provides an incomplete picture. He writes, "Root causes do not explain why crime and especially violence concentrate among small numbers of…people. Many are poor, few are criminals, and fewer still are killers. While most murderers may be poor, the overwhelming majority of the poor are not murderers" (Abt 2019, 24).

Yes, as illustrated in Chapter 2 and the literature review, the wider structural inequalities that plague black neighborhoods are important factors that, in part, drive gun violence. For example, Sampson et al. clearly showed how neighborhoods with low collective

efficacy, that is a low capacity to organize and act as an informal control on crime, have high rates of gun violence as a result. Further, these authors showed inequalities like poverty are highly correlated with high rates of violence (Sampson et al. 2001, 518). Moreover, according to Abt, when high rates of poverty persist overtime – which is clearly the case with Chicago's black neighborhoods – it puts communities, families, and individuals in extreme duress which, in turn, "leads to criminality and violence" (Abt 2019, 18). Thus, structural causes must certainly be a part of the conversation. What is missing, however, from a solely structural approach to gun violence is this crucial fact illustrated by Abt: that only a small number of individuals are driving the violence.

This point is further driven home by Andrew Papachristos et al.'s study "Modeling Contagion Through Social Networks to Explain and Predict Gunshot Violence in Chicago, 2006 to 2014". Citing previous studies that found gun violence concentrates in specific groups, the authors hypothesized that gun violence is like an infectious disease transmitting from person to person. When someone in your social circle is shot or shoots, your likelihood of becoming involved in gun violence skyrockets. This is because an individual is exposed to the "behaviors, situations, and people" where gun violence usually occurs (Papachristos et al. 2017, 327). Using arrest records showing people "co-offending" to identify these social circles, the authors looked at close to 140,000 individuals in Chicago and gun violence incidents between 2006 and 2014. Ultimately, Papachristos et al. found that "63.1% of the 1,123 gunshot violence episodes" were attributed to this social transmission (Papachristos et al. 2017, 327). In other words, Papachristos et al. (2017) write, "70% of all subjects of gun violence could be located in networks containing less than 5% of…[Chicago's] population" (327). Simply put, according to

Abt (2019), this is a trend that is reflected across American's biggest cities where shooters "make up less than 1 percent of a city's population but account for the majority of its murders" (84). Thus, Chicago's gun violence not only concentrates in disadvantaged black neighborhoods but concentrates amongst a small network of individuals in these communities.

A second key fact about urban gun violence is that a large portion of the violence is driven by gangs. Indeed, as illustrated by Abt, this is typically the case in most large U.S. cities. He writes, "Gang members make up less than 1% of an average city's population [but]…in cities like Boston, Chicago, and LA, gang-related killings account for 30% to 60% of all homicides (Abt 2019, 144). Additionally, according to multiple interviews and observations conducted by Abt, "out of a whole gang, maybe 5% commit the real serious crimes" and not every gang is extremely violent (Abt 2019, 144). Most importantly, gang-driven gun violence usually derives from disputes or "beefs" between gangs. As we saw in the literature review, this often involves retaliatory violence in response to a shooting or conflict with another gang. Shockingly, "64% of all homicides where a motive was identified were the result of disputes of some kind" (Abt 2019, 5). Therefore, gang conflict plays a large contributing role in driving a city like Chicago's gun violence. This will be an important fact to keep in mind when violence intervention and prevention programs are discussed.

If only a small number of individuals in these marginalized communities actually become violent, then, in the words of Abt, "what distinguishes the violent few from the equally disadvantaged many?" (Abt 2019, 84). Yes, being in a gang is certainty a huge distinguishing and contributing factor. However, as illustrated above, not all gang members are violent. In fact, only a very small percentage of gang members actually are. Through his years of study the

trends of urban gun violence in cities across the country, Abt provides an answer to this important question. He does this, in part, by interviewing former gang members and gun violence perpetrators. Three categories of "shooters" are identified. First, there is the "Wannabe". This is an individual who simply wants "status or belonging: and "will kill to get it". They may, for example, join a gang to achieve this goal and have to kill as a result (Abt 2019, 85-86). Secondly, there is "Legacy" which is a person who is raised in a family or household where, for example, their father was a gun violence perpetrator. Violence therefore becomes commonplace and "normalized".

Thirdly, there are the "Wounded" who are individuals that suffered extreme trauma, especially during their childhoods, like "foster care, beatings, molestation, rape" (Abt 2019, 85). This trauma experienced during childhood usually leads to violence as an adult or a teenage where studies show "youth who suffer from chronic exposure to violence are *32 times* more likely to become chronic violence offenders" (Abt 2019, 103). Simply put, a vicious cycle of violence and trauma is at play. Lastly, a fourth loose category is identified called the "Hunters". These are an extremely small number of individuals who enjoy shooting. Abt emphasizes, however, that these "Hunters" are rare, and the vast majority of individuals shoot for rational reasons (Abt 2019, 85). Critically, however, a common characteristic that shooters possess is that they are men usually between the ages of 19 and 25 (Abt 2019, 24). Thus, when seeking to identify who the select people in Chicago's black communities are committing the violence, a few common trends or risk factors are present.

The third important factor that must be kept in mind is that urban gun violence not only concentrates within specific disadvantaged neighborhoods and groups of people, but in specific

areas known as “hotspots”. These hotspots can be a few blocks where, for example, the drug trade is prevalent or a particular bar where groups containing gun violence perpetrators, like gangs, congregate. According to studies, in cities like Chicago that deal with high rates of gun violence, “4% of city blocks account for approximately 50% of the crime” (Abt 2019, 34).

Lastly, in addition to hot spots and shooters, there is specific “hot habits” or behaviors that usually cause or lead to violence. First, carrying illegal guns is often one of these behaviors. This is because most of the shootings that occur in cities take place in public and are carried out with illegally bought and unlicensed guns. If, for example, you are carrying a gun and encounter a rival gang member a shooting could follow if a dispute breaks out. Secondly, as we already saw in Papachristos et al.’s study, social proximately to someone who is a shooter or was shot greatly increases your likely hood of becoming involved. Thus, congregating with gun violence perpetrators is a hot habit. Lastly, alcohol consumption and “violent competition among drug dealers” are also hot habits. For example, because it lowers a person’s overall control and decision making, alcohol can escalate a simple argument to a shooting amongst the groups and individuals who are shooters (Abt 2019, 36).

Therefore, we begin to see that gun violence in Chicago and urban centers around the country is not random but driven by identifiable patterns. It concentrates within specific disadvantaged black neighborhoods and then concentrates even further where hot spots, specific individuals – who are pushed to violence by several common themes – and particular behaviors are responsible for the violence. In the words of Abt, when we identify these key trends regarding gun violence in cities, our perspective really changes. He writes, “Once we realize that a few people, places, and things disproportionally contribute to violent outcomes,

we can start to envision effective solutions. When violence is predictable, it is *preventable*" (Abt 2019, 40). This point, that violence is predictable and preventable, must be kept in mind throughout this final chapter. It will become extremely relevant in the next section when discussing why tough on crime measures do not work and targeted violence intervention and prevention programs do.

Part #2: Why Tough on Crime Solutions are not the Answer

Why are tough on crime strategies not the answer to Chicago's gun violence problem? In this section, I will discuss many examples of this aggressive approach in Chicago and in the U.S. as a whole. As we will see, tough on crime strategies are typically measures such as hiking up the minimum sentencing for a specific crime or flooding a neighborhood with law enforcement where they police every crime or potential crime they see. Ultimately, it is my goal in this section to show two things. First, that, in light of Abt's key principles of urban gun violence, a tough on crime approach to urban gun violence is illogical. Second, that a tough on crime approach is extremely destructive and harmful to Chicago's black communities. After these points are made, it is my hope that policy and lawmakers will now see why a tough on crime strategy is not the answer to combating Chicago's urban gun violence.

Historically, the U.S. and its major cities have responded to high rates of violent crime and crime in general with aggression. Indeed, the typical crime fighting approach adopted entailed coming down as heavily as possible on any and all crime. This began in the late 1960s when funding for police departments skyrocketed. As we saw in the introductory chapter, from the late 1960s to the 1990s Presidents Richard Nixon, Ronald Reagan, and Bill Clinton launched a war on drugs and crime. These presidents rapidly increased funding for police departments

deploying a crackdown on all crime approach. Neighborhoods, almost entirely those of color, were flooded with police and extremely aggressive law enforcement tactics. Moreover, harsh sentencing laws were passed where, for example, simple possession of a drug like marijuana could put someone in jail for eight years (Alexander 2010, 120).

Looking specifically at Chicago, the city and state of Illinois similarly deployed a tough on crime approach to curb crime and gun violence in particular. In the early 2000s, the Illinois state legislature echoed Regan, Nixon, and Clinton's aggressive sentencing guidelines by significantly raising the penalty for carrying an illegal gun. Furthermore, the Chicago Police Department (CPD) and prosecutors took a tough on crime stance where they heavily policed high crime neighborhoods – which were almost exclusively black – and harshly charged those arrested. Simply put, historically, Chicago's violent crime mitigation strategy was lock up as many offenders as possible and throw away the key (Harrington 2019). Chicago Mayor Rahm Emmanuel, who was mayor from 2011 to 2019, continued this tough on crime strategy to Chicago's gun violence. In the first years of his term, he led the implementation of harsh mandatory minimum sentences of up to five years for illegal gun carrying (Wildeboer 2013). Previously, Emmanuel was, in fact, a key member of the Clinton administration. He played a leading role in pushing through and crafting Clinton's 1990s tough on crime sentencing and policing policies. As a result, many see Emmanuel's response to Chicago gun violence as informed by this aggressive mindset developed under the Clinton presidency (Black 2014). It is evident then that Chicago partook and continue to partake in a tough on crime approach.

Although, as we will see, a tough on crime approach is destructive and, as a result, easy to dismiss, the answer is more complicated. In practice, these aggressive strategies have

somewhat contributed to a positive decline in violent crime rates. In his book *Uneasy Peace,* sociologist Patrick Sharkey illustrates this complex reality where he explores the massive violence spike and eventual decline in the U.S. Starting in the 1980s, New York City saw an unparalleled uptick in violent crime where 1,800 homicides occurred on a yearly basis. By 1990, this number reached over 2,000 homicides. This violent trend was mirrored in cities throughout the country including Chicago (Sharkey 2018, 6). In 2014, however, New York City's most violent areas, such as the Bronx, are now substantially less violent with only 328 homicides city-wide. Moreover, from the 1990s to early 2010s, this downturn in urban violence occurred in every major U.S. city (Sharkey 2018, 9).

Spending three years gathering data, Sharkey sought to find out what exactly caused this major decline in the U.S.'s violent crime rates. Interestingly, he finds that tough on crime strategies *did* have a positive impact on the homicide decline. Much like the policies and periods outlined above, Starkey illustrates how in the 1990s the federal and state governments throughout the country responded to the massive homicide uptick by hiring more police offers to patrol streets and increased surveillance. He writes, "investments in law enforcement were part of a much broader effort designed to expand the reach of the criminal justice system and to respond to the problem of violent crime through tight surveillance and brute force" (Sharkey 2018, 50).

Prior to this 1990s tough on crime period, many struggling urban communities did not have much support from police or anyone for that matter to combat the high rates of violence (Sharkey 2018, 47). A specific example of this provided by Sharkey is a street in the city of Los Angeles: Hollywood Boulevard. In the past, this street and its' surrounding neighborhoods

possessed high homicide and crime rates. Little police or community support could be found (Starkey 2018, 42-43). With the massive expansion of the criminal justice system, this changed as an unprecedented number of police "took over city streets" using aggressive policing tactics (Sharkey 2018, 51). Specifically, in L.A., the police department funding and surveillance increased dramatically. By the 1990s, Hollywood Boulevard and surrounding areas were flooded with police (Sharkey 2018, 43-44). Sharkey cites one study that found that these tactics did have a positive impact on the U.S.'s decline in violence.[1] This impact was due to "incapacitation" or the "removal of potential offenders from the streets" through the "rise of imprisonment in the U.S" (Sharkey 2018, 50). As we saw above, this massive expansion of the criminal justice system during this time period directly resulted in mass incarceration where the U.S. prison population exploded from 200,000 in 1970 to 2 million by the late 2000s (Sharkey 2018, 50). Thus, Sharkey concludes that "even the staunchest critics of mass incarceration acknowledge that expansion of the imprisoned population contributed to the decline in [violent crime rates]" (Sharkey 2018, 50).

The problem, however, is that, although this massive uptick in incarceration caused violent crime to drop, the consequences were absolutely devastating. As we have seen, the tough on crime and aggressive policing tactics were almost exclusively and purposefully focused on low-income black communities, like the one's on Chicago's South and West sides. Indeed, to win over the southern vote, President Regan and Nixon both weaponized the issue of crime. With explicit racism no longer acceptable, black was replaced with criminal. Voicing concern

[1] The study cited by Sharkey was by Jeremy Travis, Bruce Western, and Steve Redburn, eds., *The Growth of Incarceration in the United States: Exploring Causes and Consequences* (Washington, D.C.: National Academies Press, 2014).

over high crime in black neighborhoods then became the new way to be racist towards black Americans in a colorblind way (Alexander 2010, 112). Reagan and Nixon then launched the tough on crime era and expansion of the criminal justice system to fulfill their promises of cracking down on crime. With a massive media campaign creating a narrative of rampant crime in black neighborhoods, it was no secret that this crackdown had racist motives (Alexander 2010, 120).

In any case, according to Alexander, the crackdown had racist outcomes: mass incarceration disproportionately affects black Americans. In cities like D.C., three out of every four black men will be incarcerated in their lifetime (Alexander 2010, 7-8). In Chicago, 55% of the black adult male population possesses a felony criminal record and was once incarcerated (Alexander 2010, 287). As a result, thousands of black Americans were made "permanent second class" citizens as, upon release, their criminal records barred them from voting, getting a job, and accessing housing. Simply put, a criminal conviction destroyed these individuals life chances ripping communities apart and taking people from their families (Alexander 2010, 5). The racist origins of the tough on crime tactics and their catastrophic effects of black Americans and their communities is the first of many reasons why we must reject this as a solution for Chicago.

Worst of all, these aggressive law and order strategies completely destroyed black and other communities of color's trust in the criminal justice system. This occurred because police criminalized entire neighborhoods assuming every person was or could be up to no good. This criminalization was a part of the crime fighting strategy. For example, during the massive 1990s spike in homicides, the New York City Police Department (NYPD) and Mayors office adopted the

"broken windows theory". According to this theory, violence and homicides increased because of small crimes or "signs of disorder" in a neighborhood. Thus, the NYPD and the Mayor's office decided to police and arrest aggressively for every little minor crime. Critically, this included stopping, questioning, and searching any person in high crime minority neighborhoods that they thought looked suspicious. As recent as 2010, Mayor Bloomberg continued this harsh policy. As a result, from 1990 to 2010, minor crimes and misdemeanor arrests doubled, and the number of police stops went from 100,000 to 700,000. The majority of those impacted were black and brown residents. Similar policies were replicated in Chicago and cities across the country with comparable results (Sharkey 2018, 129-131). This completely destroyed black and other communities of color's trust in police as many were automatically assumed to be criminals and harassed. As we saw in Chapter 3, this erosion of trust has had deadly consequences on Chicago's streets driving violence. Therefore, we have to ask ourselves tough on crime tactics, in part, worked and the violence declined but at what cost?

Critically, however, Sharkey shows that even the progress made on homicide rates during the tough on crime period is misleading as other factors outside the criminal justice system had a significant impact. Indeed, during the 1990s, community members also responded to this massive uptick in violent crime by creating local organizations. For example, in Los Angeles, Concerned Citizens of South-Central LA (CCSCLA) was formed by community members to address gun violence in their neighborhood. This organization did things to support and better their community like building 100 housing units, ensuring drug dealing did not partake on the public streets, and providing support services for at-risk youth. Throughout the 1990s, 4,800 non-profit community organizations aiming to combat the inequalities and

violence in L.A. alone were formed. Analyzing U.S. city data from 1990 to 2010 on nonprofits, Sharkey found that "every new organization formed to confront violence and build stronger neighborhoods led to about a 1% drop in violent crime and murder" (Sharkey 2018, 53-54). Therefore, it was not just the aggressive crime fighting tactics that caused the great homicide decline in the U.S. It was policing tactics *and* community organizations that re-took the streets. This impactful role of such local nonprofits must be kept in mind and will be key in part 3 when discussing why violence intervention tactics are so effective.

Additionally, returning to Abt's key principles of urban gun violence, a tough on crime approach is simply illogical. If urban gun violence is being driven by a small number of people in particular hot spots in the communities most effected, how does blanketing entire neighborhoods with police officers make any sense? Even in a city like Chicago, with shockingly high rates of gun violence, it's most violent communities are comprised of residents who are overwhelmingly peaceful. Indeed, as illustrated by Papachristos et al., the vast majority of the violence occurs and is perpetrated by a small network of individuals within Chicago's high violence neighborhoods. Thus, criminalizing entire neighborhoods and locking up thousands in the process in the name of curbing violence is irrational and unnecessary because law abiding citizens are many and shooters are few.

Further, my hope is that the anti-racist perspective on Chicago's gun violence developed in Chapter 2 would further lead any policy maker to dismiss a tough on crime approach. Indeed, we saw how many of the structural inequalities that black Chicago neighborhoods face explain, in part, why gun violence is so high there. Black communities face this unequal reality with conditions that encourage violent crime and white Chicago neighborhoods do not. Most

of all, we saw how decades of housing discrimination and segregation aimed at black Chicagoans created the inequalities that their communities face today. As a result, we began to see gun violence perpetrators not just as criminals, but victims of a racist divide created by a racist past. This humanizing perspective would make any lawmaker think twice before simply taking the tough on crime stance of cracking down on "those dangerous criminals". They would see the situation in Chicago's black neighborhoods is more complex than good and bad or criminal and non-criminal. Thus, with this new understanding, policy makers would reject the fear driven approach of the past and, as I will outline in part 3, choose a more humane solution.

Most importantly, a singular tough on crime approach to urban gun violence is ineffective. Yes, it is effective in that it takes potential shooters off the street. What it does not do, however, is "address the deeper causes of violence" (Abt 2019, 48). As we have seen, shooters are driven to violence by specific factors like trauma during childhood. Moreover, violence often occurs after a dispute between gangs. Simply locking people up does little to address the behaviors and underlying reasons that caused a shooting or drove someone to become a shooter. Indeed, as shown by Sharkey (2018), studies reflect that the only benefit mass incarceration had on violence reduction was due to incapacitation *not* rehabilitation (50). What is more, mass incarceration and aggressive policing tactics are expensive. Locking thousands up and spending millions annually to fund a bloated police budget is unsustainable and completely unnecessary (Abt 2019, 48). This, in my view, takes away money that could be used more effectively like, for example, reparations to counter Chicago's racist history and its aftermath in black neighborhoods.

Looking to part 3, the most effective approach is one that is *balanced* and *focused*. Indeed, according to Abt, studies show that policing is most successful in curbing urban gun violence when it focuses solely on the people and places that are responsible (Abt 2019, 49). Moreover, balancing positive support and negative consequences is proven to truly alter the behavior and habits driving the violence (Abt 2019, 47). As shown by Sharkey, the combination of community organizations and crime tactics in curbing the 1990s violent crime uptick provides support for a policy solution like this. As we will see in part 3, Violence intervention and prevention do exactly this.

Therefore, we must move away from a tough on crime centric solution to Chicago's urban gun violence. This is why I say, in part, I agree with prison abolitionists and BYP100. I agree that locking people up in mass is cruel and that the current criminal justice system does little to actually address the reasons behind a person's incarceration. I agree that we need to completely re-think the way police operate moving away from a punishment-centric approach and towards a more community-centered one. I *disagree,* and agree with the tough on crime right, in that police and the criminal justice system in general should not be a part of the solution. Indeed, according to Sharkey, it is important to keep in mind that police did play a role in decreasing violence and they must continue to be incorporated in any violent crime fighting strategy (Sharkey 2018, 121). As I will outline in part 3, punishment and prosecution as a deterrence is an important component of anti-violence programs. In the end, the devastating effects the tough on crime era approach has had on black communities is disgraceful. Urban gun violence and the factors causing it are extremely complex. A more humane, just, and comprehensive strategy that acknowledges this reality is needed.

Part 3: Why Violence Intervention and Prevention Programs are the Best Option

If a police-centric approach is not the answer, what then is the best public policy solution to Chicago's gun violence problem? In this section, I will argue that violence intervention and prevention programs are the best and most effective option for tackling urban gun violence. In comparison to the usual police-centrist strategies, these programs are a completely new way of approaching policing and tackling violent crime. Critically, as we will see, violence intervention and prevention address the legal cynicism created by decades of police abuse outlined in Chapter 3. In other words, these problems, unlike a tough on crime approach, acknowledge that, although police must be part of the solution, they are a part of the problem as well.

Why should Chicago start first with directly addressing violence? As shown in Chapter 2, decades of racial discrimination created inequalities for Chicago's black community which are closely correlated with high rates of gun violence . Why then not first focus on, for example, ending high rates of black poverty through investment? In the words of Abt, the answer is "to address concentrated poverty but violence first" (Abt 2019, 24). This is because "violence perpetuates concentrated poverty" (Abt 2019, 21). In other words, not only do high rates of poverty cause violence but high rates of violence "*perpetuate* poverty" (Abt 2019, 21).

This, according to Abt, is the case for several reasons. First, high rates of violence can create a toxic environment for individuals, especially children, severely impacting them. Indeed, living in a highly violent neighborhood can create fear and stress which, in turn, can cause substance abuse and health problems in adults long term. Moreover, for children, growing up in a violent community can completely destroy their life chances. Abt illustrates

that a 2015 study conducted by several economists reflected this reality. He writes, "[They found that] poor kids growing up in violent neighborhoods were less likely to move up the economic ladder than those who lived in equally poor but less dangerous settings" (Abt 2019, 22). Worst of all, studies show that "more than half of urban youth exposed to violence suffer Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)," which can significantly diminish people's—and especially children's—ability to function. As a result, these studies showed that children living in high violent communities suffered greatly in their learning capacity and life chances (Abt 2019, 22). Thus, for Chicago's black residents, high rates of violence coupled with severe inequalities makes it almost impossible to escape poverty.

Secondly, urban gun violence has severe economic impacts on neighborhoods and residents most effected worsening concentrated poverty. This, according to Abt, occurs through a process of avoidance by people, businesses, and investment which devastates an area's economic prospects. He writes,

> "Fear also leads to avoidance. People naturally want to escape danger in order to stay safe. When residents, workers, customers, and tourist avoid a black, neighborhood, or city, the…commercial life of those locations drain away. People relocate, refuse to visit, and decline to invest in places they believe are dangerous. Avoidance also devastates local businesses, strangling their economic prospects. In Washington, DC, each homicide has been estimated to cost the city two retail or service businesses. Avoidance also destroys residential and commercial property values. In Oakland, each murder cost the city an estimated $24,600 in average home value in the next year" (Abt 2019, 23).

Therefore, through this process of avoidance, the city Chicago and it's gun violence ridded black neighborhoods suffer severe economic consequences. Any hope of reviving or undoing the inequalities in Chicago's black areas created by years of discrimination are squashed by high rates of violence. As a result, the fleeing of residents and businesses from violent

neighborhoods and cities lowers the tax base and the revenue that the area will receive. This forces city officials to slash key government services that these poor communities struggling with gun violence need the most (Abt 2019, 23).

Additionally, the simple occurrence of a shooting or homicide costs a city and its residents millions of dollars a year. These include direct costs pertaining to the criminal justice system, lost labor, medical, and property damage (Abt 2019, 23). For example, in Chicago, the University of Chicago Crime Lab estimates that every year the city's gun violence costs around $2.5 billion in total and $2,500 per household. This includes – like Abt outlines – direct costs coming from medical expenses, but it also includes indirect costs such as depopulation. Indeed, according to the same study, "every homicide in Chicago reduces the city's population by 70 people". This trend completely destroyed the highly violent black Chicago South Side sucking people and businesses from it (Huffington Post 2013). If, however, we choose to focus on simply reducing violence through anti-violence programs, then we can reduce these harmful effects that are making Chicago's unequal black neighborhoods even more unequal. According to the Center for American Progress, a 25% reduction in homicides would increase home values in Chicago by $5.5 billion (Huffington Post 2013). This would, in turn, free up massive amounts of city funds and resources to help struggling communities where Chicago could increase community service spending by 66% (Abt 2019, 26).

With all of this in mind, Abt concludes that we must address the most urgent problem in front of us and focus all resources on directly reducing violence through violence intervention and prevention programs. This would help lift communities and people out of poverty and make any effort to address the stark racial inequalities that define a city like Chicago much

easier (Abt 2019, 26-27). I certainty agree with Abt and recommend to Chicago policy makers that reducing gun violence rates through anti-violence programs should be the number one priority. I still believe, however, that it is critically important that the city also addresses the systematic and entrenched inequalities that black neighborhoods face. This is why, in the next section, I recommended reparations and other efforts because we must address the past. Indeed, the only way to truly ensure violent crime rates stay down in Chicago's black neighborhoods long term is undoing the city's unequal racial divide. Simply reducing homicide rates is a start but it is not enough.

Turning now to violence intervention and prevention programs, there are many different strategies and services that encompass this approach. First, we must first begin with a violence intervention and prevention approach known as Group Violence Intervention or Group Violence Reduction Strategy (GVRS) (Abt 2019, 89). To understand how GVRS works, it makes sense to look at the city that first successfully deployed this strategy: Boston. In response to a high number of homicides amongst its youth population (ages 24 and younger), the city launched Operation Ceasefire in 1996. Like Chicago, studies showed Boston's high gun violence rates were being driven by a small subset of the population, less than 1% of the city population, who were gang involved (Braga et al. 2011, 198). With this key fact in mind, the operation identified those most likely to be a perpetrator or a victim of gun violence and focused all their attention solely on this small group. Then, a coalition of organizations and agencies would bring these select individuals into meetings called sit-ins. This coalition included the Boston Police Department, the Massachusetts Departments of Probation and Parole, the Office of the U.S. Attorney and, critically, several community organizations like non-profits and churches.

Moreover, streetworkers, who were former gang members or gun violence perpetrators, also sat in and helped identify the most violent individuals and groups (Braga et al. 2011, 199). These formally gang-involved street workers are a vital part of any anti-violence effort and will be explained later.

In their study of Operation Ceasefire's effectiveness, Braga et al. perfectly summarize what these sit-ins, or as they called it the pulling levers strategy, with identified violent individuals or gangs looks like. They write,

> "the pulling levers strategy…involved deterring violent behavior by chronic gang offenders by reaching out directly to gangs, saying explicitly that violence would no longer be tolerated, and backing that message by 'pulling every level' legally available when violence occurred. Simultaneously, streetworkers, probation and parole officers, and later churches and other community groups offered gang members services and other kinds of help. The Ceasefire working group delivered this message in formal meetings with gang members…the deterrence message was not a deal with gang members to stop violence. Rather, it was a promise to gang members that violent behavior would evoke an immediate and intense response" (Braga et al. 2011, 199-200).

Thus, the Boston criminal justice system, in partnership with the communities most effected by its gun violence, specifically targeted the most violent individuals holding them accountable *together*. Critically, this focused approach not only included punishment if the violence continued but also assistance. If a violent individual wanted to turn their life around, they could with the help of the Ceasefire coalition. If, however, the violence continued the criminal justice entities in the coalition would hold the identified individuals or gangs accountable by arresting and prosecuting them (Braga et al. 2011, 200). When they did this, the coalition would explicitly explain to the individuals why they were being held accountable and targeted. Communication was key (Brage et al. 2011, 200).

The main idea behind this strategy is one of deterrence. If the coalition of organizations makes it riskier for the small group of individuals to actually participate in violence, then they hypothesize that this will reduce shootings. This will, in turn, create a long last reduction in violence as the tit for tat or retaliatory cycles of violence, which as we saw is a huge driving factor of urban gun violence, is cut off (Braga et al. 2011, 200). Ultimately, Braga et al. (2011) find Operation Ceasefire was extremely successful where, between 1991 and 1998, there was a "63% reduction in the mean monthly number of youth homicide victims from…3.5 youth homicides per month to…1.3 youth homicides per month" (2011). Moreover, the authors found that, during the same time period, Ceasefire areas were connected to a "25% decrease in the monthly number of citywide gun assault incidents, a 32% decrease in the monthly number of citywide shots-fired calls for service, and a 44% decrease in monthly number of youth gun assaults" (Braga et al. 2011, 211). Lastly, in its first year of implementation, Boston's youth homicide numbers went from an average of 44 to 15 in 1997 its lowest in years (Braga 2011, 204). Thus, deploying GRVS, Operation Ceasefire was successful in curbing Boston's urban gun violence rates.

Looking at Chicago, GRVS has already been deployed in select areas on a small scale in the city's most violent neighborhoods. The results were quite promising. In their 2005 study, Papachristos et al. evaluate the impact an initiative called Project Safe Neighborhoods (PSN) had on gun violence rates in the areas it covered. The biggest component of this initiative includes – much like Operation Ceasefire – GRVS programing. A group of organizations from the CPD, Cook County State's Attorney's Office, and over 12 community-based groups worked together to identify current and past gun violence offenders (Papachristos et al. 2005, 9). They

do this by looking at individuals who have a criminal history of or were recently arrested for a crime related to gun violence. Similar to Operation Ceasefire, the PSN coalition then brings these individuals to those sit-down meetings. Their goal is also to stress the "consequences" if they continue to perpetrate gun violence and the "choices" these violent individuals have to stop shooting and turn their lives around (Papachristos et al. 2005, 10).

Further deepening our understanding of GRVS, Papachristos et al. provides a good description of these call-ins where they contain three main parts. They write,

"The first segment of the forum contains a strict law enforcement message…local, state, and federal law enforcement agencies discuss the PSN enforcement efforts in the target areas….The second segment of the forum entails a 15-minute discussion with an ex-offender from the community who works with local intervention programs. The speaker uses personal experience describing how he managed to stay out of jail and away from guns. The ex-offender is usually an older, former gang-leader who has turned away from crime and who now works as a street-intervention worker…The final segment of the forum stresses the *choices* that offenders can make in order to avoid re-offending…speakers from various agencies in the community discuss their programs…programs include substance abuse assistance, temporary shelter, job training, mentorship and union training, education and GED courses, and behavior counseling. Often several local employers attend and actually tell offenders the necessary steps to gain employment" (Papachristos et al. 2005, 12).

Like Operation Ceasefire, PSN specifically targets the most violent offenders and deploys law enforcement entities and community organizations to not only hold them accountable but to also help them. As I will explain later, the behavioral counseling is a key service these GRVS

programs provide that can address a lot of the underlying trauma that drives someone to become a shooter. The most important part, however, of the PSN initiative is its goal: to increase law enforcement legitimacy. Yes, like Operation Ceasefire it aims to increase the costs of shooting for the small number of individuals responsible for urban gun violence. It's central goal, however, is to treat the participants they bring into the call-ins with *respect.* Clearly and respectfully explaining their options to the violent offenders and letting them choose whether to continue shooting or to seek help is a huge focal point. You are a part of the community and your community cares about you, they stress. This will, in the eyes of the PSN program, cause targeted individuals to buy in and see local law enforcement as more legitimate (Papachristos et al. 2005, 19).

Ultimately, Papachristos et al. find that the PSN program achieved significant reductions in gun violence in their target neighborhoods. Critically, the neighborhoods they targeted were all mostly black and extremely poor on the city's South and West Sides (Papachristos et al. 2005, 30). Returning to Chapter 2, these areas are certainty the same black neighborhoods who have high rates of gun violence and have suffered from decades of racial discrimination. Between 2002 and 2005, the authors analysis finds that the PSN target neighborhoods had a "37% drop-in quarterly homicide rates". Other neighborhoods used as their control also experienced a decline in homicide but not nearly as large or significant as the PSN target areas (Papachristos et al. 2005, 37-38).

Building off these positive results, another study in 2015 looked at and evaluated the success of a separate GRVS program in Chicago. This study, conducted by Papachristos and Krivo, focused on the Chicago's Group Violence Reduction Strategy (VRS) initiative from 2010 to

2013. Like PSN, VRS used call-ins where they carried out 18 of them interacting with "149 gang factions and 438 individual gang members" (Papachristos and Krivo 2015, 527). To measure the program's success, the authors look at 3 gangs that partook in the call-ins and three gangs that did not. In the end, Papachristos and Krivo found that those who participated in the call-ins were less likely to shoot or be involved in a shooting. They write, "On average, factions attending a call-in were involved in 0.35 shoots in the year after the call-in whereas control factions were involved in 0.46 shootings. This difference of 0.10 shootings equates to a 23% reduction in shootings after attending a call-in" (Papachristos and Krivo 2015, 549). These examples show us that the GRVS, strategy, in practice, was quite successful in reducing gun violence rates in Chicago's most violent neighborhoods.

Critically, these GRVS programs use one key process to identify the individuals who are currently and most likely to become perpetrators of gun violence: "social network analysis" (Abt 2019, 90). Returning to Papachristos et al.'s (2017) social network analysis, the authors found that "70% of all subjects of gun violence could be located in networks containing less than 5% of the [Chicago's] population" (327). The authors concluded that urban gun violence almost acts as an infectious disease where, if someone in your social circle is shot or shoots, your likely hood of becoming involved in gun violence sky rockets. They found these small social groups that are most responsible for Chicago's violence by looking at individuals arrests records and identify who co-offended (Papachristos et al. 2017, 327). Simply put, if an individual has a lot of social connections to people involved in a current or past shooting incident than they are high risk and should be targeted with services and support (Abt 2019, 90). Therefore, deploying this social network analysis, policy makers and any organization

looking to deploy a GRVS program can use this to identify and target the small number of violent individuals. This identifying mechanism will become important later when we discuss other anti-violence strategies.

In addition to GRVS, a second violence intervention and prevention strategy that must be an important part of Chicago's efforts to curb gun violence is known as street outreach. Like GRVS, the best way to fully understand what this anti-violence approach entails it is to look at an example. In 2007, the city of Baltimore implemented the *Safe Streets* program. This was, in fact, a replication of a similar program called *Ceasefire* that began in Chicago. Much like Chicago, Baltimore is a city that suffers greatly from high rates of urban gun violence and severe racial inequalities and segregation (Webster et al. 2012, 27). After being implemented in Chicago, studies showed that *Ceasefire* reduced gun violence significantly in 4 out of the 7 neighborhood they targeted. These neighborhoods resided within Chicago's marginalized black South Side (Whitehill et al. 2013, 85). The program operates on the belief that a huge part of what drives urban gun violence is retaliatory shootings resulting from a conflict or another shooting. Returning to Chapter 3, street outreach holds that this cycle of violence comes from the "code of the streets" where individuals feel they have to use violence to protect themselves or settle their scores because the criminal justice system will not do so (Whitehill et al. 2013, 85). As we saw, these retaliatory killings are a huge factor that drive Chicago's urban gun violence.

In their study evaluating *Safe Streets* success, Webster et al. provide an extremely clear explanation of how a street outreach program works. According to the authors, street outreach uses individuals who are former gang members or gun violence perpetrators. As a

result, these individuals have “street cred” to operate in and interact with cities’ most violent neighborhoods and people. This “cred” allows outreach workers to be a positive influence and get through to the gun violence or gang involved people they target. Similar to GRVS, street outreach specifically identifies the small group of individuals who are currently or most likely to become gun violence victims and perpetrators. The outreach workers then operate as violence mediators “identifying and mediating conflicts between individuals or gangs”. Once they identify a conflict between two violent individuals or gangs that could lead to a shooting, street outreach workers then work to help all parties involve resolve the dispute peacefully. Everything will be done to prevent a beef from turning into a retaliatory shooting. Critical to this approach is the social network analysis conducted by Papachristos et al. where the program sees gun violence acting like an infectious disease. Diffusing a dispute before it turns violent or, as outlined below, targeting a gun violence perpetrator and aiming to direct them away from a life of violence can break the vicious cycle of urban gun violence (Webster et al. 2012, 28).

Arguably its most important function, street outreach workers recruit the identified violent individuals and attempt to steer them off their current path. They do this by connecting these individuals to life coaching, mental health services, job training, and different educational opportunities. Typically, and in the case of the *Safe Streets* program, a street outreach program will be attached to a community based non-profit organization that provides these services. Additionally, street outreach workers will also attempt to organize heavily affected communities against gun violence. According to Webster et al., *Safe Streets* workers “mobilize

communities by holding monthly events designed to bring the community together, promote nonviolence, and provide positive activities for youth" (Webster et al. 2012, 28-29).

In evaluating *Safe Streets* success, Webster et al. looked at the four neighborhoods that the city implemented the street outreach program. All of these neighborhoods suffered from high rates of gun violence and were mostly black with extreme inequalities. Looking at homicides and nonfatal shootings between 2003 and 2010, the authors deployed various regression analyses and models finding positive but mixed results. They found the most positive outcome in the Cherry Hill neighborhood where nonfatal shooting incidents and homicides decreased by 34% and 56% respectively. In the McElderry park neighborhood, however, there were certain periods where homicides only decreased slightly, and shootings went up. This was because *Safe Streets* split McElderry's street outreach workers with another nearby neighborhood. When the workers focused solely on McElderry, the authors found *Safe Streets* efforts caused a 53% reductions in homicides and a 10% reduction overall between shootings and homicides (Webster et al. 2012, 33-34). In the end, however, we see that street outreach, in practice, has positively reduced urban gun violence in Chicago and other violent cities like Baltimore.

Why then are these violence intervention and prevention programs so effective and how do they depart from traditional police-centric approaches? Returning to Abt, these programs are effective for three key reasons: focus, balance, and fairness (Abt 2019, 92). First, in regards to focus, GRVS and street outreach specifically and solely focus on a city's most violent individuals and groups. Using a social network analysis, these programs identify and then target the small number of people and gangs that drive urban gun violence. As we saw at

the beginning of the chapter, a hallmark of urban gun violence is that only a small number of individuals are actually shooting. Violence concentrates in highly disadvantaged neighborhoods, but it concentrates further amongst a small network of connected individuals. Thus, street outreach and GRVS acknowledge this reality and, unlike a tough on crime approach, do not criminalize all residents within Chicago's most violent neighborhoods. If just one- or two-gun violence perpetrators are successfully turned away from a life of violence, then this will make a serious dent. Moreover, they focus on the specific events that usually lead to violence, like gang disputes. This addresses the direct causes of urban gun violence instead of simply locking up or aggressively policing entire neighborhoods. After conducting a meta-review of more than 1,400 different studies, Abt and others find further support for this focused approach as the most effective gun violence reduction option (Abt 2019, 88).

More than just simply being more effective at curbing gun violence, a focused approach is a more *just* approach. This brings us to Abt's second reason as to why these anti-violence programs are so effective: they are fair. Again, since GRVS and street outreach, in conjunction with the police, only focus on the small number of individuals perpetrating urban gun violence, they are not criminalizing entire communities. The way in which police operate and *interact* with people completely changes. No longer do they pursue a scorched earth policy where every resident is stopped and searched, and every crime is aggressively pursued. This will not only reduce the destructive impact a tough on crime approach can have – like mass incarceration – but also increase the legitimacy of law enforcement amongst a city like Chicago's most violent neighborhoods. This is because residents of any city's most violent neighborhoods will begin to see the system as fair (Abt 2019, 75). Indeed, in the words of Abt,

"residents tolerate and encourage aggressive law enforcement tactics when it focuses on the most dangerous individuals" (Abt 2019, 41). When law enforcement legitimacy increases, legal cynicism decreases. Perpetrators become less likely to carry a gun or turn to street justice to solve a dispute. The code of the streets is eroded and gun violence decreases.

Further, GRVS and street outreach programs are fair in that they treat gun violence perpetrators with respect. As seen in the GRVS programs, a huge focus point of the sit-ins is to clearly and respectfully explain to the violent individuals why they are being targeted and what options are available to them. The coalition of organizations give the gun violence perpetrators they are meeting with agency to choose their faith. Stop the violence and accept our help or choose to continue shooting and you will be pursued by law enforcement. Police, prosecutors, and members of the community treat these perpetrators as *human beings* meeting them face to face. This dramatically departs from the way in which police treated black Chicagoans in the past. Buy in from participants is then created as they feel like they are being treated with respect and fairness especially by law enforcement. Legitimacy towards law enforcement and the criminal justice in general will therefore increase in the eyes of gun violence perpetrators. Legal cynicism then decreases (Abt 2019, 75). Moreover, on the topic of legitimacy, street outreach workers can further increase this amongst gun violence perpetrators as they target perpetrators and treat them with dignity asking them to stop the violence. Due to their past experiences, they go where police cannot and, if need be, involve them in a dispute they are trying to deescalate (Abt 2019, 94). As a result, any interaction with law enforcement is seen as fairer as someone who possesses a shared experience is involved (Abt 2019, 96). Legal cynicism and gun violence fall as a result.

Lastly, GRVS and street outreach initiatives are effective because they are balanced. According to Abt, the most impactful approach to curbing urban gun violence is one that has both positive and negative incentives. Simply put, one needs a "carrot and stick" strategy because people respond to both (Abt 2019, 47). Returning to Sharkey's book, we saw support for this balanced approach as police and community organizations together caused the major 1990s violent crime decline. This is exactly what GRVS, and street outreach do, they bring community organizations and the entire criminal justice system together in a partnership to curb gun violence. Police are not the only actors and prosecution, or arrests, are not the only option as street outreach workers step in and mediate conflicts (Abt 2019, 95). Most of all, much needed services, like a job or life counseling, are provided where punishment is the last resort. Gun violence perpetrators are first given an opportunity and the support to turn their lives around. If they reject this offer for help and continue shooting only then is punishment brought in. Historically, Chicago's gun violence mitigation strategy, typically tough on crime, *led* with punishment. GRVS and street outreach, however, completely flip this concept and lead with *assistance*. A police-centric approach can therefore only do so much as it just locks someone up.

The community and support services violence intervention and prevention programs provide is preciously why they are so effective. These services directly address the *reasons* that drove people to pick up a gun in the first place. Returning to the PSN in Chicago, a critical service this program provided was behavioral and life counseling. This is typically referred to as Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT). As stated at the beginning of this chapter, Abt illustrates how a key reason that drives someone to become a shooter is trauma suffered during

childhood. A person can suffer something like abuse as a child which can lead them to become violent as an adult. As a result, according to Abt, this can lead to "hypervigilance" or unusually aggressive responses and behaviors in situations. Like PSN, this is a service street outreach programs also connect the violent offenders they target to. CBT helps gun violence perpetrators process their trauma and become more aware of what their actions can result in. New strategies for dealing with this past trauma and reacting more calmly and rational in high-intensity situations are formed. In practice, studies show that CBT is highly effective. Indeed, in Chicago, a CBT-based program called Becoming a Man (BAM) decreased its participants' likelihood of possessing a violent crime arrest by 40-50% (Abt 2019, 99-101). Thus, violence intervention and prevention programs do much more than simply locking a violent offender up and throwing away the key.

Again, with all of this in mind, this is why I position myself in the middle of the-what-should the government do about crime. In a way, violence intervention and prevention programs align with what prison abolitionists are calling for. Anti-violence programs actually address the underlying causes that led a gun violence perpetrator to pick up a gun and seeks to rehabilitate them. Moreover, they include strategies and community investments in programs other than just punishment such as jobs, education, and mental health support. These are all important goals of the abolitionist movement. Violence intervention and prevention strategies use of police and punishment is where I, and Abt, department from the abolitionists side. As we saw above, a crime fighting strategy that is balanced between punishment and assistance is most effective in curbing urban gun violence. This differs greatly from BYP100's belief that the CPD must be abolished. In contrast, the tough on crime right would agree with the use of

police and prosecution by anti-violence strategies. They would disagree, however, with these programs working with and providing a second chance to past and current shooters. People like President Trump would object stating a tough approach where we simply lock a violent offender up is the answer. Thus, anti-violence strategies take pieces from all sides of the debate and offer a practical and balanced alternative.

At this point, we have now seen what the key violence intervention and prevention programs entail and why they are so effective. Most of all, we have seen they are a substantially better option than the police-centric tough on crime policies of years past. GRVS and street outreach are not only more effective but less destructive and fair. No longer do we need the mass incarceration and police harassment of our most unequal neighborhoods. What are the obstacles to their implementation? At this point, a Chicago policy maker looking at these programs might say yes, they are effective but why should we work with violent criminals? They are guilty of ripping communities apart and taking lives why should the city of Chicago give them support? Indeed, in response to a 2010 GRVS initiative by the CPD, several Alderman and state legislators responded with horror. Alderman Bob Fioretti stated, "I can't believe we're sitting down and negotiating with urban terrorists who are killing our kids with guns and drugs on the streets. These are not people [the police] ought to be negotiating with. They've now been elevated to equals. They're not equals" (cited in Papachristos and Krivo 2015, 526).

Further, in response to calls to take a portion of CPD's funding and funnel it into communities, Alderman Anthony Napolitano stressed Chicago must continue to keep police funding high and crack down hard on gun violence offenders. He stated, "The kowtowing to

domestic terrorists hiding under the cloak of social justice and the failure to prosecute criminals put us where we are today" (Norman 2020). After a string of deadly shootings, President Trump continued these calls to come down hard on Chicago's gun violence perpetrators threatening to "send in the feds" to stop the "carnage". He then described Chicago's minority communities struggling with high rates of violence as "living in hell because it's so dangerous. You walk down the street, you get shot" (Abt 2019, 161).

This is where our historical ani-racist perspective, and my original contribution, come into play. A key reason why anti-violence programs are not implemented more widely is the racist dehumanization of black gun violence offenders. This is why an anti-racist humanizing perspective is so important. As seen in Chapter 2, decades of discrimination in housing and segregation, often times perpetrated by government, marginalized and impoverished Chicago's black neighborhoods. Today, this history has carried over where, for the most part, it created the extreme inequalities and segregated faced by black Chicagoans. Putting this in context with Sampson et al.'s study and structural analysis, we gained a fully anti-racist perspective of Chicago's gun violence. Simply put, it became evident that Chicago's racist past created the unequal reality that allows gun violence to thrive in black neighborhoods today.

In Chapter 3, the outlining of Chicago's history of police discrimination towards black Chicagoans further strengthened this anti-racist historical perspective. Through several studies, it was illustrated how much of the gun carrying and shootings in Chicago originate from legal cynicism. Gun violence follows because certain people feel they cannot trust law enforcement to protect them or solve their disputes. Court room justice becomes street justice. After outlining Chicago's history of police abuse against black Chicagoans, we saw where this deep

cynicism comes from: police abuse against black communities. As a result, it became clear why particular individuals possess great legal cynicism and why this leads them to violence. Again, I am not excusing violence but simply saying that this anti-racist viewpoint allows us to understand why black Chicagoans are picking up guns. This humanizes their behavior and allows policy makers to actually find a solution that will sufficiently address the problem.

Therefore, I argue, the same Alderman who quickly dismissed violence intervention and prevention efforts in Chicago would now react much differently. Indeed, with this historically performed anti-racist perspective, these Alderman and Trump would begin to see black gun violence perpetrators as more than just "urban terrorists", namely as both aggressors and as victims of a racist past that created an unequal racist divide. With urban gun violence being driven heavily by and concentrating in Chicago's black neighborhoods, these Alderman would now understand why this is the case. No it is not due to black culture or some inherent criminality amongst black Americans. It is because black Chicagoans, not white Chicagoans, directly experienced decades of unequal access to fair housing, segregation, and police abuse. Black Americans, not white Americans, suffer the consequences of this history today living in severely unequal conditions. This is why urban gun violence falls so heavily on the shoulders of black Chicagoans not whites. As a result, black gun violence perpetrators are humanized and programs that directly engage with and assist them appear as rational. Alderman Fioretti, Napolitano, and President Trump now go from seeing violence intervention and prevention programs as helping "domestic terrorists" to helping complex individuals who are victims of a racist divide in Chicago. The perspective needed to truly support these humanizing strategies is gained.

I also argue that the humanizing effect of anti-violence programs speaks to and aligns closely with a common prison abolitionist critique: that the criminal justice system is inhumane. In other words, criminalizing and *only* punishing poor black individuals in struggling communities is wrong considering their circumstances. Punitive-centered approaches do not seek to or care about rehabilitating violent offenders (Kelly 2019). As seen through the tough on crime era and Alderman Fioretti's quote, instead of rehabilitating them, the tendency in our justice system is to simply punish and lock offenders up and throw away the key. This is what abolitionists are trying to get at. That our country's typical crime fighting strategy is to harshly punish and give up on those who commit violence or crimes. In my view, this is yet another reason why anti-violence programs are not more widely in use due to this tendency to punish. Gun violence and its effects are serious. The death and devastation it causes to communities must be stopped. So, yes, a tough on crime approach makes sense because of this. We must resist, however, this temptation to simply punish and turn to solutions that will uplift and improve communities. This is what anti-violence programs do and our anti-racist perspective provides lawmakers with the humanizing lens necessary to embrace them.

Lastly, there are two anti-violence strategies that I believe Chicago must also fully implement. The first is known as hotspot policing. As we saw at the beginning of this chapter, urban gun violence concentrates in specific locations like a block where drugs are sold. To curb urban gun violence, police should focus their attention exclusively on these hot spots (Abt 2019, 121). For example, in 2009, the city of Philadelphia implemented a hot spot policing program deploying 200 officers. These officers focused exclusively on 60 different locations that gun violence data identified as hot spots. An evaluation of this program found that, after

just 12 weeks, the target areas greatly outperformed control areas. Indeed, the study connected 53 fewer or a 23% reduction in violent crimes (Ratcliffe et al. 2011, 798). For Abt, like GRVS and street outreach, hot spot policing works because it is fair and focused. By focusing only on the most violent locations, police get the most bang for their buck because they are addressing violence at its direct source. Most of all, police officers behavior completely changes as they are no longer aggressively policing entire neighborhoods. This further increases law enforcement legitimacy in the eyes of Chicago's most violent neighborhoods as everyday residents are not criminalized or harassed (Abt 2019, 121). Thus, hotspot policing is effective and can be a step in changing the CPD's behavior and relationship with the city's black community.

Secondly, Chicago must implement violence prevention programs that exclusively identify and target the gun violence perpetrators of tomorrow. These programs identify young teenagers based on their criminal behavior and record where they provide support services. Studies show that delinquent behavior in a person's teens or childhood usually lead to violence as an adult. This is why prevention programs are so important because they stop a shooting before it even happens by ensuring at-risk youth do not go down a violent path. Prevention programs typically achieve this through services like mental health support, educational assistance, and life coaching. The most important service they provide is increased assistance and guidance for families. Indeed, prevention programs will help whoever the guardian of the at-risk youth identify the delinquent behavior and support them so that a life of violence does not later become their reality (Abt 2019, 105-106). A common critique of this prevention approach is that they criminalize at-risk teens before they even become violent. This, however,

isn't the case because targeting them means more support not arresting them or locking them up (Abt 2019, 35).

These violence intervention and prevention programs, taken together, provide Chicago with a completely new way of tackling urban gun violence. Not only are they effective, but they are focused, fair, and balanced. They depart greatly from the tough on crime policies of the past and change how law enforcement act and treat the communities they police. An extremely focused policing approach that partners with the community, treats offenders with respect, and focuses exclusively on the people and places that are most responsible for the violence is something never before seen in urban America. It is a humanizing approach that takes into account the complexities of violence and why an individual choose to pick up a gun in the first place. Most importantly, it does not just rely on police to stop gun violence. The community and desperately needed services, like job training and CBT counseling, are incorporated. This makes it more holistic, impactful, and positive for the communities and individuals involved. Critically, Chicago must deploy a strategy that incorporates all of these anti-violence programs. As we will see with Los Angeles, using every anti-violence tool you have available gives a city the best opportunity to decrease gun violence and heal communities.

While this shift will not completely undo decades of police abuse inflicted on Chicago's black community, it is a start. My hope is that police department policy will inform how CPD officers treat and *see* residents of the city's most violent neighborhoods. If law enforcement, informed by studies and data, are aware that gun violence is perpetrated by a small group of individuals, and police neighborhoods based on this assumption, this will impact them. They will no longer see every resident as a criminal and treat them accordingly. The culture in CPD

will begin to shift. Every CPD officer therefore should be educated on Chicago's racist past and how it created many of the trends and inequalities driving gun violence in black neighborhoods today.

Today, recently elected Chicago mayor Lori Lightfoot has begun to make the pivotal shift to a gun violence mitigation strategy centered on violence intervention and prevention programs. In April of 2020, she announced an allocation of $7.5 million in city funds to 10 previously established non-profit community organizations that deploy anti-violence strategies like GRVS and street outreach (Office of the Mayor 2020). Prior to this, however, violence intervention and prevention organizations suffered severely from lack of funding. Emmanuel only briefly allocated $1 million, and it took several months for Lightfoot to seriously commit to any serious funding (Hinkel et al. 2020). This is certainty a huge step forward, but it is not enough. More funding and investment is needed in these extremely effective and innovative approaches. Many of these organizations continue to rely heavily on private donors to operate. Chicago's 2020 budget allocated $1.7 billion towards the CPD (Ali 2020). The city could take some of this money and re-allocate it *specifically* to violence-intervention and prevention programs solving funding woes. In any event, Chicago must follow the example of cities like Los Angeles who, after making serious investment in ant-violence strategies, dramatically reduced gun violence rates. Indeed, in their budget, L.A. allocates roughly $25.9 million to violence intervention and prevention efforts (Hinkel et al. 2020).

Looking at L.A., the city serves as an example for Chicago and any other city struggling with urban gun violence that serious reductions are possible through anti-violence strategies. In 2007, the Advancement Project – which is a public policy organization aiming to make a more

equitable system for L.A. residents of color – released a comprehensive report outlining how, after spending nearly 30 years waging a war on crime and drugs, the city still had high rates of violence. In fact, the report found that violence and gang-based violence actually *increased* despite $25 billion spent on police and other tough on crime tactics (Advancement Project 2016, 3). As a result, the Advancement Project heavily criticized the cities war on crime and called for a different approach that did more than simply arrest gun violence perpetrators and gang members. They called for "a community safety model based on a comprehensive public health approach that melded strategic suppression, prevention, intervention and community mobilization" (Advancement Project 2016, 3). This model Advancement Project referred to was exactly the violence prevention and intervention programs that were discussed above.

In response to this report, the L.A. government and various other community organizations and stakeholders completely transformed the city's approach to urban gun violence. Through the city's Office of Gang Reduction and Youth Development (GRYD), L.A. implemented various violence intervention and prevention programs in specific high-violence neighborhoods. With The Urban Peace Program – which is the anti-violence arm of Advancement Project – leading the way, L.A. deployed a wholistic strategy called the Comprehensive Violence Reduction Strategy (CVRS). This approach included many of the violence prevention and intervention tactics I outlined above in one program (Advancement Project 2016, 5). Indeed, CRVS includes prevention, intervention, and even reentry services. Like many of the successful models we saw prior, CRVS specifically identifies and targets individuals who are currently and most likely to join a gang or be a gun violence perpetrator. They then deploy intervention strategies, like street outreach and GRVS, and prevention tactics

to mediate conflicts and prevent individuals from joining a gang in the first place (Advancement Project 2016, 6-7). Critically, Urban Peace launched an academy that recruits and trains street outreach workers to intervene and stop shootings. This was a crucial step as it professionalized the relatively new job of street outreach work. Through this academy, the Advancement Project reports that "over 1,200 gang interventionists and over 400 police officers" were trained "to work together towards violence reduction" (Advancement Project 2016, 6).

Ultimately, by 2011, L.A. began to see extremely positive results. GRYD covered neighborhoods saw a 15% reduction in all gang-crime and "35% fewer gang-related homicides". Additionally, covered zones saw a "42.4% reduction in shots fired" and street outreach workers, in conjunction with police, have intervened in "2,386 incidents of violence inside and outside GRYD zones". The program's, success, however, was limited not just to violence intervention and reductions in shootings and homicides. CRVS had success in violence prevention as well. They report, "49.7% of current participants have reduced risk factors and negative behaviors…23% of participants have decreased antisocial behavior…[and] 48% decrease in participant involvement in gang activities" (Advancement Project 2016, 7). This successfully stopped gun violence before it even started by steering at risk youth down the right path. Therefore, through a serious investment in anti-violence programs, L.A. was able to make impressive reductions in gun violence while healing and addressing the underlying causes driving people to shoot. They did this without locking up or arresting their residents in mass. Today, this progress continues as L.A. had "350 fewer homicides than Chicago" in 2020 (Hinkel et al. 2020).

Chicago must follow L.A.'s lead and commit to making a more serious investment in violence intervention and prevention programs. Policy makers and lawmakers may say that, after the fiscal downfall caused by COVID-19, that Chicago's city budget simply does not have the funds to make a serious investment. Returning to Abt's analysis, gun violence costs the city millions in direct costs and billions when one combines direct and indirect costs together. For direct costs, a single homicide can cost anywhere from $10 to $19.2 million racking up charges from "lost labor…property damage, as well as medical and justice system costs" (Abt 2019, 23). When indirect factors are factored in, like depopulation and lost revenue to businesses, then homicides on a yearly basis cost the U.S. up to $332 billion (Abt 2019, 23). In Chicago, the University of Chicago Crime Lab estimates that, annually, gun violence costs the city $2.5 billion or $2,500 per household (Huffington Post 2017). Reducing gun violence rates by, for example, 25% could free up millions and increase property values all across Chicago by $6 billion (Abt 2019, 26). Thus, a short-term investment can reap long term rewards where it pays for itself and then some.

In conclusion, Chicago must continue to shift towards a more humane and common-sense approach to curbing gun violence. The tools and strategies needed are present. It is time for the city to take a leap of faith and begin to heal its struggling communities. It is my hope that, after gaining a historically anti-racist perspective of Chicago's gun violence, lawmakers begin to see that the city has a moral obligation to make these investments. After all, it was Chicago's discriminatory past, often times perpetrated by government policies, that created the unequal conditions that are fueling gun violence in black communities today. A serious

investment in anti-violence programs would be a first step to, in the short term, finally undo and address this problematic history.

Part 4: Undoing the Entrenched Inequalities in Chicago's Black Neighborhoods

Violence intervention and prevention strategies alone, however, will not fully curb Chicago's gun violence within black neighborhoods in the long run. We need these short-term solutions *paired* with long-term ones. The reason for this is illustrated by a common critique of these anti-violence programs: that they are short sighted. Critics say that such an approach reduces violence in the short term, but, in the long term, they do not bring about any meaningful change. As shown by Abt, I would counter this critique with any short-term reduction in gun violence rates *will* in fact bring about meaningful change in the long run. Indeed, in the words of Abt, poverty perpetrates violence, but violence perpetrates poverty as well. The decrease in gun violence brought about by anti-violence strategies will alleviate the devastating economic and psychological impact it can have on people. This will, in turn, start to lift black Chicagoans, who suffer from unequal conditions and high rates of violence, out of poverty and into living a healthier violence-free life (Abt 2019, 21).

Despite this, I do believe there is a kernel of truth to this critique. To fully curb the high rights of gun violence in Chicago's black neighborhoods, policy and lawmakers must address the systematic and entrenched inequalities they suffer. As we saw in Chapter 2, studies show that these inequalities, like unemployment, are closely correlated with high rates of violence. In other words, these inequalities provide the perfect environment for gun violence to thrive. This is why I recommend that the city of Chicago, and even the Illinois state legislature, begin to take steps to address and eliminate the unequal and segregated reality black Chicagoans find

themselves in. Achieving this will take years but a long-term strategy, in conjunction with anti-violence programs, are needed to make meaningful and lasting reductions in gun violence in black neighborhoods. To do this, Chicago must began with reparations. Again, this is where I am in agreement with BYP100. Like prison abolitionists, I believe investment and redistribution of resources into black communities in the form of reparations is absolutely essential.

Historically, a common pushback from lawmakers and the public to reparations, investments, or welfare programs aimed at the poor is to brand such actions as undeserved handouts. Politicians like Ronald Regan pushed a narrative that people on welfare are lazy and should just work harder to pull themselves out of poverty. He, in turn, invented the stereotype of the "welfare queen" which was a single black mother refusing to work and stealing from the government (Taylor 2016, 51-52). In her book *From #BlackLivesMatter to Black Liberation,* Keeanga-Yamahtta Taylor further illustrates this problematic narrative and how, when talking about high rates of black poverty, people often blame black culture or black laziness. This, according to Taylor, is due to the "myth of American exceptionalism". The U.S. is the land of opportunity. If you just work hard anyone can make it. For Taylor, this is the myth of American exceptionalism because this is simply not the case for black Americans (Taylor 2016, 29). Indeed, she illustrates how decades of discrimination in all aspects of black Americans lives has created an unequal reality today. Black American's can't work hard and make it because they face ten times as many obstacles as white Americans (Taylor 2016, 35). Critically, Taylor contends that this narrative of black laziness arise because white people do not acknowledge that America's history of racial discrimination disadvantaged black Americans even today. This essential fact is left out of the conversation (Taylor 2016, 28).

In agreement with Taylor, this thesis has sought to bring the long history of racism to the heart of the conversation. Indeed, in Chapter 2, I outlined Chicago's history of racial housing discrimination and racial segregation and how that not only impoverished black Chicagoans at the time but carried over today where it largely created the city's current unequal reality. For this section, the most important aspect of this history is that government policies perpetrated so much of this discrimination against black Chicagoans. From redlining to a redevelopment, the driving force behind the segregation and economic devastation of black residents was local and federal government action. Thus, it becomes evident why reparations from government is in order because they are guilty in having a huge hand in creating black Chicagoans unequal reality today.

What's more, white Chicagoans greatly benefitted from this discrimination. Their exclusive access to government subsidized housing loans and newly built homes in the suburbs positioned them favorably. Great wealth was created as a result allowing them to pass this from generation to generation. Worst of all, in Chapter 3, it became clear that decades of police abuse against black Chicagoans created the high rates of legal cynicism driving gun violence in their neighborhoods. Therefore, with this historically informed anti-racist perspective, I hope to help convince lawmakers and the public to no longer see reparations or any investment in Chicago's black neighborhoods as an undeserved handout. They will now see it as a morally obligated act to repair past harm. As a result, lawmakers can now garner the political and public support they need to make this kind of serious investment possible.

What then would reparations look like in Chicago? One does not have to look far to find a model to follow. Just last week, in March of 2021, Evanston, which is a northside suburb of

Chicago, overwhelmingly passed a resolution to implement reparations in the town. Reparations is coming from a fund that derives money from a tax on the revenue generated from recreational marijuana sales and private donations. In total, the fund is estimated at $10 million. The money, however, will not be given out in the form of direct checks. It will, at least for the first phase, be given as a housing grant to go "toward home repairs, mortgage assistance or down payments toward a new home". Evanston residents are eligible for these grants if, according to the *New York Times,* they show that "they or their ancestors were victims of redlining and other discriminatory 20th-century housing practices in the city" which restricted black Chicagoans living options. For example, a black Evanston would be eligible if they showed that they descended from someone who fell victim to city housing discrimination policies between 1919 and 1969 (Bosman 2021).

Although this reparations plan is not perfect or nearly large enough, it is a start. The city of Chicago could implement a similar program specifically targeting it's unequal and primarily black South and West Side neighborhoods. What is particularly appealing about Evanston's reparations proposal is that it directly addresses past housing discrimination. As we saw in Chapter 2, discriminatory housing polices ranging from the 1920s to the 1960s completely denied black Chicagoans equal and fair access to housing impoverishing them and banishing them to slum like neighborhoods. Today, this hurt black residents. Thus, in an attempt to make up for this history of housing discrimination, the Chicago city council could draft and pass a reparations resolution like Evanston's. This, however, would have to be much larger and expansive as the damage and discrimination inflicted on black Chicagoans is substantially greater than that of Evanston.

Lastly, there are several policy solutions Chicago can deploy to address the extreme racial segregation it faces today. First, according to Metropolitan Planning Council, there are specific housing policies that Chicago's city council can pass to build more inclusive neighborhoods and housing for poor black residents. In their report "Our Equitable Future: A Roadmap for the Chicago Region", one council details several policy recommendations to dismantle "the barriers that create disparities and inequities by race and income" (Metropolitan Planning Council 2015). One of their most compelling recommendations is for Chicago to expand housing options "by increasing CHA voucher subsidies". This would entail expanding what CHA would except for a housing voucher rent to "200% of fair market rent". As a result, low-income residents with house vouchers could move into middle to upper income areas because this rent exception increases the value of a voucher. According to the Planning Council's estimates, this would allow low-income voucher holders to have access to "3,377 more housing units" (Metropolitan Planning Council 2015). Since so many black Chicagoans are low-income, this could be a first step in desegregating Chicago as it would allow them to move into middle-to-high income white neighborhoods.

Secondly, Chicago can fully outlaw and attack exclusionary zoning laws. Gone are the days of racially restrictive covenants that explicitly barred black Chicagoans from buying a home. Now, zoning laws are implemented that bar multifamily housing and only allow single family homes. This prevents low-income residents, which are disproportionately black, from moving into middle-to-upper class communities as there are no affordable housing options for them (Walk-Morris 2021). The Illinois state legislature can take action and make it illegal to have any zoning laws that discriminate on the basis of a person's income. Additionally, Chicago

can follow the desegregation policy plans of Senator Warren and Senator Booker. Both U.S. Senators offer upwards of $16 billion in incentives that would go towards infrastructure projects. Cities and towns would receive this money if, for example, they authorized "more high-density and multifamily zoning" or got rid of zoning rules like "minimum lot sizes" that limit the ability of low-income residents to move into different areas (Quick and Kahlenberg 2019). Ending exclusionary zoning could be a first step in making it easier for low-income black Chicagoans to move out of the South or West Side and into white areas. Although these are modest policies, the Metropolitan Planning Council (2015) estimates that decreases racial segregation in Chicago can raise the average income for a black resident to "$2,982 per person per year" (4). Thus, any decrease in white-black segregation can make a meaningful impact on racial disparities.

In conclusion, I will acknowledge that there is simply no easy solution. These policy solutions will not suddenly undo the entrenched disparities faced by Chicago's black residents. Indeed, the racial inequalities and segregation in Chicago today are extreme and systematic. Decades of racial discrimination across all aspects of black Chicagoans lives developed these inequalities. It will take roughly the same amount of time, maybe even longer, to fully undo what this discriminatory history created. Reparations and efforts to desegregate, however, represent a first step the city of Chicago can take. A first step where the city and the state as a whole finally *acknowledge* the racist past and the role it played. For fair too long Chicago and its residents have ignored this history and the effects it has on black residents today. It is time to own up to history and repair the harm done to black communities. Only then can long lasting reductions in gun violence be achieved in Chicago.

Chapter 5

Conclusion

The purpose of this thesis was to take a racial justice lens to Chicago's gun violence and completely re-shape the way in which lawmakers, policy makers, and every day Chicagoans – especially those that are white – look at the problem. In the introductory chapter, I identified a gap in the current literature where authors clearly identify certain driving factors of urban gun violence – such as poverty, segregation, and legal cynicism – that explain why the violence is so heavily concentrated in and driven by black neighborhoods in Chicago. What was left out, however, is the discriminatory history aimed almost exclusively at black Americans that created these inequalities and driving factors. As a result, racist critiques that black culture is to blame for the inequalities and the violence were not fully squashed. After putting Chicago's history of housing discrimination and segregation in context with these studies, I now believe we have achieved a firm anti-racist perspective on the city's gun violence. Structural inequalities and factors like legal cynicism *created* by this history are why gun violence rates are so high in Chicago's black neighborhoods. Returning to the main argument of my thesis, policy makers, lawmakers, and everyday Chicagoans will be better equipped to see black gun violence perpetrators as more than just criminals, but victims of a racist divide created by a racist past.

This new anti-racist perspective, I hypothesized, will open policy and lawmakers minds to solutions other than tough on crime strategies. In particular, I anticipated that the effective violence intervention and prevention programs would become more of a rational option because this historically informed anti-racist perspective humanizes black gun violence perpetrators. As we saw above, these anti-violence tactics require working directly with current and former shooters where you must treat them with respect and understand exactly what led them to pick up a gun in the first place. Simply put, these programs require a

humanizing perspective of gun violence offenders. At this point, after taking a racial justice and historical lens to Chicago's gun violence, I believe this thesis has provided policy and lawmakers with this humanizing viewpoint. As a result, they will be more willing to get behind anti-violence strategies because they no longer see black gun violence perpetrators as simply dangerous criminals. Policy and lawmakers now see these perpetrators as complex individuals who fell victim to an unequal racial divide created by a discriminatory past that government played a role in. Thus, violence intervention and prevention approaches are more rational and harder to reject.

I further hypothesized in the introductory chapter that taking a historical approach would make the long-term and serious investments necessary for undoing the inequalities in black neighborhoods begin to appear not as undeserved handouts, but reparations for decades of harm. This, I anticipated, would then provide the justification needed for lawmakers to make these steps a reality. I argue this justification is now present. Indeed, we saw how decades of police abuse and housing discrimination and segregation created many of the inequalities and factors driving gun violence in black neighborhoods. Most of all, we saw that government policies and actions, which include law enforcement, were often the one's behind this discrimination inflicted on black Chicagoans. After seeing this, I argue how can anyone look at Chicago and not believe reparations and serious policy action to undo what this history created are not in order?

Future research, however, is needed. Gun violence and crime more generally is an extremely complex topic where our understanding still continues to grow and develop. One way to strengthen this racial justice lens of urban gun violence is for future research to dive

more into the complexities of gangs. Specifically, why individuals in high-violence neighborhoods choose to join gangs. It is my assumption that many of the inequalities created by Chicago's discriminatory past, like poverty and unemployment, drive individuals to join gangs. With gangs driving much of urban gun violence, future research can strengthen my anti-racist perspective by connecting and contextualizing these reasons with the city's history of discrimination against black Chicagoans. This would provide a deeper understanding as to why individuals choose to join gangs further humanizing urban gun violence perpetrators.

Lastly, I believe doing a comparative case study of Chicago's gun violence would be extremely beneficial for future research to explore. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, I was thinking of doing a comparative case study between Chicago and New York City. Specifically, I wanted to compare Chicago's black South and West Sides with the Bronx. Previously, I worked as a policy intern for a violence intervention and prevention organization in Chicago called Chicago CRED. When discussing my thesis with my former boss, he suggested I do a case study between the Bronx and Chicago because, years prior, the Bronx was what Chicago is today. The Bronx, which is mostly black, had extremely high rates of gun violence and suffered from many of the same inequalities Chicago's black South and West Sides do. After some serious investments in housing and anti-violence programs, he explained that gun violence rates dropped dramatically in the Bronx over time where today it is significantly more peaceful. Future researchers should entertain this as an option where they interview gun violence perpetrators, community organizations, and policy makers in both cities to learn what the Bronx got right. This would allow similarities between the two cities to be identified and Chicago to see how they can replicate such success in their city. I think this would powerfully

illustrate what works and what does not when it comes to ending urban gun violence and inequalities in black neighborhoods.

In the end, it is my hope that this thesis will truly spur new action and conversations amongst policy makers, lawmakers, and everyday Chicago citizens. Returning to the story of Yasmin Miller, we must begin to pay attention to the everyday violence and structural inequalities that are so negatively effecting black communities in Chicago. Serious action and policy solutions can no longer be delayed. In 2020, Chicago gun violence rates yet again reached staggering heights with 643 homicides and 3,468 shootings (Chicago Tribune 2020). A more humanizing approach to this violence with anti-violence programs leading the way is required. Urban gun violence must be addressed but without simply locking up and harassing Chicago's black communities with a tough on crime-centric approach. I call on Mayor Lori Lightfoot and the state of Illinois to continue to make investments in the violence intervention and prevention strategies that work. More serious action and investments, however, are needed. It is time to take the first steps in reckoning with Chicago's uncomfortable past because black lives matter.

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